

Dark dance seeks successors



Time moves fast, and at the young age of 50, Japanese Butoh dance is in danger of disappearing in its own land.

Masters of the art are eyeing China in hopes of finding new blood for this "old" spirit.

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Wood a manly outlet

Not satisfied with the furniture in the store? Roll up your sleeves and craft your own!

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Francophone festival

Twenty-eight countries are aiming to show China there's a lot of culture outside the Anglosphere.

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Nation's eyes are on top political meeting

Economic restructuring

In the aftermath of the latest global financial crisis, which exposed an alarming bevy of defects and malpractices in the world economy, restructuring has become the keyword in recovery.

Against this backdrop, delegates to the National People's Congress and National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference will thrash out the 12th Five-Year Plan to guide the 2011-2015 development of the world's largest developing country.

"This year is the opening year of China's 12th Five-Year Plan, and the most important element of the grand plan is to transform the pattern of economic development," said Chen Kang, a professor at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore.

Priorities in economic restructuring include boosting domestic demand, improving people's livelihood, promoting scientific and technological innovation, optimizing industrial mix and accelerating equal provision of basic public services.

Noting that China does need to expand internal demand, Mark Williams, an analyst at the London-based economic research consultancy of Capital Economics, stressed

As China opens the annual sessions of its top political advisory body and top legislature this week, the whole world is poring over the two events that bear global significance.

At the focus of the glaring international spotlight are the nation's economic restructuring, peaceful development and defense posture, shown by a recent series of Xinhua interviews with scholars, researchers and business leaders from different countries.

that such an effort will influence not only Chinese consumers but those in Europe and the US.

"Because our economies are not so well at the moment, if China is successful in rebalancing its own economy, that would also help the rest of us," he added.

By mapping out this year's national economic development goals, "two sessions" will strengthen the confidence needed to shore up the global economic recovery, which many cautioned is still fragile.

Peaceful development

Besides steering China's economic development forward, the "two sessions" will also elucidate the government's foreign policy once again to the international community, reaffirming the country's commitment to peaceful development and its sincerity in pursuing common prosperity with other countries.

As a heavyweight in world economy and politics, China frequently interacts with the international community, and its adherence to peaceful development and readiness to share due responsibilities have stricken responsive chords with many across the globe.

China's peaceful development means that it integrates into the world in a peaceful way and reaches a tacit understanding with other countries, big or small, said Thomas Renard, a research fellow at the renowned Belgian think tank Royal Institute for International Relations.

"To some extent, China has already made it," he said.

Defense posture

China's adherence to peaceful development can be seen in its defense policy, which is defensive in nature and dedicated to peace.

The military has been the victim of unfounded suspicions and accusations fabricated by media from

Europe and the Americas which cited the country's reasonable increase in military spending to paint a negative image.

During the "two sessions," China will demonstrate to the world yet again its unrelenting commitment to world peace, reassuring the international community that its development poses no threat to any other country.

China's current military modernization efforts, said Picquart of the University of Paris, are aimed principally at maintaining social stability and safeguarding economic growth.

The "China threat" claim was also rejected by Gennady Churin, a China expert at Moscow's Institute of World Economy and International Relations, who dubbed the slander an exaggerated distortion.

"Chinese national interests, for at least 50 years ahead, lie in securing the country's sustainable development," he said. "These plans require adequate protection, which is not the same as aggression."

The Fourth Session of the 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference started yesterday, two days before the Fourth Session of the 11th National People's Congress opens. Both of the week-long events take place in Beijing.

(Xinhua)

NPC frees 13 from death penalty

By Zhao Hongyi

Earlier this week, the standing committee of the Chinese National People's Congress commuted 13 people's death sentences to imprisonment.

Their convictions included crimes such as smuggling of cultural and historical relics, noble and rare metals and protected wildlife or wildlife products, producing and selling counterfeit products, commercial and financial document fraud, credit fraud, producing fake tax receipts, grand theft, plundering of ruins and grave robbing.

The total number of death penalty convictions for 2010 was reduced from 68 to 55, according to the congress.

"It's a great leap for the judicial history of our country," said Liu Mingxiang, professor and vice dean of the School of Law at Renmin University.

The death penalty is conservatively used as a deterrent to people who would commit serious crimes, he said.

In the early 1990s, tax, document and credit fraud were considered extremely serious crimes, as was the smuggling of relics and animals to foreign countries.

"It shows the progress we are making in building a more free and tolerant society," said Lang Sheng, deputy director of the Legal Committee of the congress.

The congress also elevated the seriousness of drunk driving and passed an amendment that requires all people found to be driving drunk to face prison time.

The amendment also lists participation and organization of mafia-like societies as a crime punishable by no less than seven years in prison. Public servants who are involved in such societies will face a minimum of five years imprisonment.

The producers of fake or dangerous foodstuffs will face similar punishments, with sentences ranging from five to 10 years imprisonment. Those whose dangerous food products are directly linked to the death of a consumer will face the death penalty or a minimum of 10 years imprisonment.

Employers who refuse to pay their workers will face a maximum sentence of seven years.

The congress refused to free criminals over the age of 75 from legal punishment, but did agree to take age into consideration when sentencing.

"The abolition of the death penalty should be a gradual legal process," Lang said, stressing its nature as a deterrent.

Mou Xinsheng, deputy of the National People's Congress, said the country is in the middle of a huge transition that has led to a surge in crimes and social conflicts.

"It's unrealistic to suddenly eliminate a punishment that is such an effective deterrent," Mou said.

Law to protect dying culture

By Han Manman

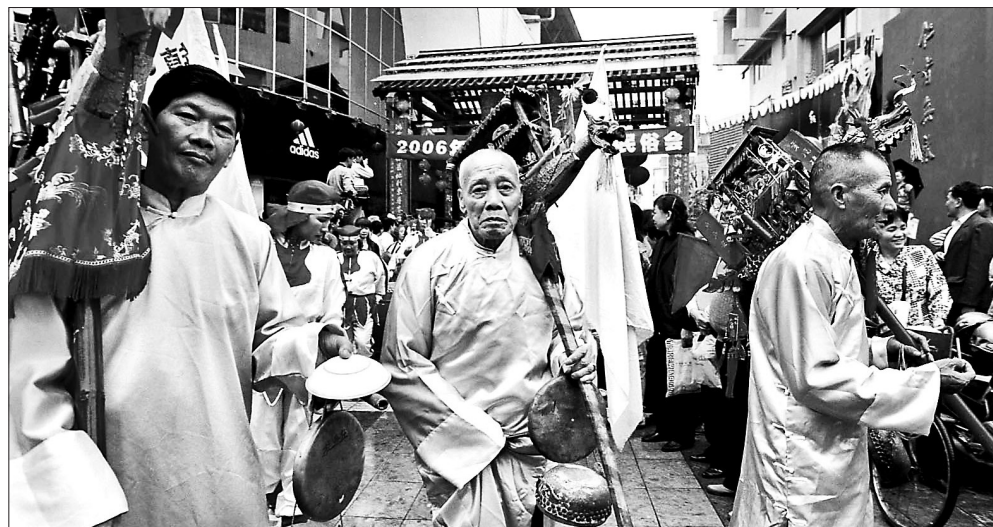
Foreign organizations and individuals will not be allowed to conduct surveys of the nation's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) without approval from senior government regulators, according to a new draft law on the protection of intangible assets.

The law, which would take effect on June 1, is expected to ensure the better preservation of the country's cultural legacies. The law is the country's first on cultural heritage protection and is considered a milestone.

It requires overseas organizations wishing to conduct a survey on ICH to ally themselves with at least one cultural regulator as a local partner. Written approval must be obtained from local authorities at the provincial level or above before an overseas survey team can carry out fieldwork.

Foreign organizations and individuals who violate the law may face fines ranging from 100,000 to 500,000 yuan.

The absence of ICH laws has resulted in the loss of and damage to intangible cultural treasures, Cao Baoming, president of Jilin Provincial Folk Artists Association said. Some organizations and individuals from abroad have taken advantage of legal loopholes to record how many rare treasures are created in remote mountainous regions, Cao said.



Many forms of intangible cultural heritage are disappearing due to lack of protection by local government.

IC Photo

There have been reports of cases involving the fishing culture of the Hezhe ethnic people in Heilongjiang Province, he said.

The new law defines ICH as traditional oral literature, rituals, medicines, arts, skills, sporting activities and festivals passed down from generation to generation by the nation's diverse ethnic groups.

"The primary target of China's heritage protection efforts used to be tangible items including artifacts and historic relics. The new law means that, for the first time, traditional cultural practices now have legal protection,"

said Zhu Bing, a member of the NPC Standing Committee who has been involved in the law.

Zhu said China has a wealth of ICH, but without proper protection some may disappear.

"Many cultural treasures in our ethnic communities are under assault by urbanization and modern civilization. The enactment of the intangible cultural heritage law will help raise awareness among the local government and individuals of how to better preserve their precious legacies," Zhu said.

The law provides that the State

Council and provincial governments must create lists of ICH items for national and local levels. The national government will assist in protection efforts in ethnic minorities and remote areas.

"From this year on, heirs can receive up to 10,000 yuan from the central budget as financial support for carrying forward ICH items," Zhu said.

Statistics from the Ministry of Culture show that the State Council and the ministry have designated 2,516 national ICH items and 1,488 masters of ICH culture as of 2009.

Poll shows distrust an epidemic

By Zhang Dongya

The Chinese once had many to believe in: leaders, teachers and elders.

Today, disillusionment is widespread, and few trust the words of the local government, the media or their neighbors.

A survey conducted by *Outlook Weekly*, a news magazine affiliated with Xinhua News Agency and Sinomonitor International, a Beijing-based market monitoring company, showed this crisis of trust has spread to all levels of society.

According to the results, more than 46 percent of the respondents said they distrusted former common sources of information: fewer than 5 percent said they continued to trust.

People with a rural hukou showed more satisfaction with the credibility of their friends, with

62 percent saying they believed their neighbors; only 54 percent of urban residents said the same.

Similarly, respondents with higher educational backgrounds showed more distrust, with about 48 percent of college degree holders saying their degree of distrust was "bad" or "very bad."

Despite the pessimistic outlook on society, most people ranked their own integrity quite high. Almost 88 percent of the respondents said they believed they were honest, and more than 90 percent with a higher education believed their own word to be credible.

"Rural people have a very low standard for 'credibility,' while city people and those with higher education place more expectations on their sources of information. That people rank themselves highly and rank others low shows

they don't understand how their behavior impacts the people around them," Xiao Mingchao, vice-director of Sinomonitor International, said.

Many complained that the government's policies were not to be trusted due to how little related information is disclosed.

Last November, a primary school student named Zhang Hao and his parents concluded that 90 percent of the mushrooms on the market in Beijing had been subjected to artificial whitening. Their study was based on a test assisted by professionals.

The Beijing Administration for Industry and Commerce countered with its own report that said 97.7 percent of edible mushrooms are free of whitening agents. A recent survey found that out of a random sampling of 1,007 people in five cities more than 1,000

people chose to believe the pupil's conclusion – the government's report won seven supporters.

Among industries, the five most disreputable are believed to be medicine, real estate, beauty salons, the service industry and agents who assist in arranging marriage and housekeeping services.

That medicine and real estate are so distrusted despite being so close to people's lives shows that something is seriously wrong in these industries, Xiao said.

Scandals exposed in media, such as contaminated milk powder and Tang Jun's faked credentials, have only further eroded the public's trust.

In 2006, Peng Yu helped an old woman when she fell down in street, but she then sued Peng for compensation after she was treated in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Since then, there have been

many reports of old people who fall down in the street but are left to die by crowds who are afraid to help.

Nearly 90 percent of respondents said they had suffered a loss due to someone else's dishonesty.

Dangerous fake products and corruption are still considered the top sources of dishonesty in the country and the ones that most shake people's trust. Professors of sociology are calling the already significant problem a national sickness.

The survey was conducted between February 11 and 14 in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hangzhou and Chengdu. It recorded responses from people between the ages of 15 and 60 and from a variety of educational backgrounds. Foreign residents were excluded.

Park halts Ferris wheel construction in Chaoyang

By Zhao Hongyi

The Chaoyang Park Ferris wheel, once expected to be the world's tallest observation wheel, may be getting the axe.

After three years of being stalled, a park investor said the foreign bank that was baking the project has pulled out. Residents near the park have been complaining about how much its area has been locked off due to similar stalled projects.

The wheel project was launched in November 2007. The investor, Beijing Great Wheel Corporation, announced at the ceremony that it was building the largest Ferris wheel in the world. AVI Design, the Holland firm responsible for the Millennium Wheel in London, was invited to work on the design.

The wheel was expected to be 208 meters tall, built with an investment of \$99 million (650 million yuan) and completed within two years. Its 40 fancy cabins would have been priced between 50 and 80 yuan.

"The project died in early 2008, far before the Beijing Olympic Games in August that year," a nearby resident said.

Beijing Great Wheel Corporation claims the project is only on hold. An employee at the corporation surnamed Wei said it is having problems with the bank. "We have no estimate for when construction will resume," he said.

"I have lived beside the park since 2003 and have been watching this natural reserve slowly chewed apart by these commercial entertainment projects," said Zhang Xingsheng, a frequent visitor to the park.

Chaoyang Park was designed in the early 1990s as a green lung for the east side of the city. In the years since, it has been devoured and broken apart by entertainment firms, restaurant, hotels, clubs and the sex industry.

"It should have been an important natural preserve in the city," said Wang Ran, Zhang's friend and neighbor. "It's a tragedy to see this beautiful park turning into a haven for night clubs and sex traffickers."

National Museum reopens after dramatic expansion



Specializing in general history, the National Museum archives and presents more than 1 million cultural and historical relics. CFP Photo

By Zhang Dongya

After more than three years of reconstruction and expansion, the National Museum reopened to the public Tuesday for the first time since 2007.

Located on the east side of Tian'anmen Square, the newly-expanded floor space of 192,000 square meters makes the National Museum the world's largest. The project cost 2.5 billion yuan.

The National Museum's origins date back to 1912, when it was a preparatory office for a history museum located in today's Imperial Academy. In 2003, it was combined with the the National Museum of His-

tory and the National Museum of Revolution and given its present name.

Specializing in the nation's general history, it has collected more than 1 million cultural and historical relics.

Ancient China, one of the top exhibitions, displays 3,000 antiques from the Old Stone Age to Qing Dynasty in the basement. The collection includes pottery, bronze ware, porcelain, jade, stoneware, calligraphic art and paintings, weavings and other handicrafts.

Another big exhibition is Road to Revival, which reviews the country's significant recovery from

the Opium War in 1840 to the last Emperor Aisin-Gioro Puyi's edict to end Qing rule in 1912.

The museum includes halls with collections from Europe, the Americas and Africa, and will have periodic international exhibits. Illuminative Arts, the first, will be held in coordination with the Berlin National Museum, the Dresden National Art Collection Museum and the Bavarian State Picture Galleries on April 1. Its 600 works from Germany will be on display for the next year.

Another exhibit exploring the history of ancient Peru from the 1st century to the 7th century will open April 28 in the Americas

Room. The collection will include 180 cultural relics, including potteries, textiles and stoneware.

Other new facilities include a theater capable of seating 800, a multi-function hall with 300 seats, a broadcast studio and stores selling books and souvenirs.

The new museum expects to receive as many as 8 million visitors, three times more than it did before renovation. Basic exhibits will be free to the public.

Visitors can begin heading to the museum on March 17. It can accept 2,000 group visitors and 1,000 individuals each day. Group visits must be booked in advance.

Dogs bark at gov's orders

One-pet policy makes life hard for men's best friend

By Huang Daohen

For both the young and old, the companionship of a dog is a special thing: it's a friend who waits for you at the door when you get home from work and curls up at your feet when you watch a movie.

Sharing your house with a pet is a commitment. So it's understandable that dog lovers went barking mad when the Shanghai government adopted a harsh policy last week that allows only one dog per household.

Loyal dog's reward

Two-year-old golden retriever Jingjing touched the nation when a tragic fire in Shanghai last November killed more than 58 people.

Jingjing lingered around the flaming high-rise apartment building and waited more than 40 hours for his master, who was believed to be trapped in the building. During his time waiting, Jingjing refused to eat or drink but only waited until firefighters found and brought down his owner.

Photos of Jingjing waiting in front of the blaze moved many who saw them on the Internet. But Shanghai's recent rules on dog ownership have many crying that the dog's loyal act is going unrewarded.

Last Wednesday, the Shanghai government passed its One Dog Policy limiting each household in the downtown area to one canine.

The new law, which takes effect in May, is intended to rein in the city's skyrocketing dog population after 140,000 reported bites in 2010.

Under the law, dog owners who currently have two or more unregistered dogs must give all the excess dogs away to families who are dogless or send the animals to approved shelters. Dogs that have already been registered may be kept.

But Shanghai's skyscrapers are home to an estimated 800,000 pet dogs only one quarter of which are registered: the new law would displace a quarter of a million pet.

Unregistered pets and strays will be collected and sent to adoption centers and animal shelters. Dogs who fail to find new owners within one month will be killed.

The Shanghai government said that unregistered and stray dogs are collected and treated well, but refused to comment on their ultimate fate.

Easier life in suburbs

Many dog owners in downtown Shanghai worried about the future of their pets, but Dennis

Bao found a way out.

He sent his dog to the suburbs.

This past weekend, Bao, 28, drove 50 minutes to his parents' home in Songjiang District to see Dandan, his 3-year-old husky. He made the decision after he received a registration notice last month.

"I get the notice every year, but the registration fee this year really irked me. Now they're asking for 2,000!" Bao said. As an employee of a local import and export company, Bao's income has been heavily shaken by rising labor costs and the yuan's appreciation.

He lives in downtown Xuhui District, inside the city's inner ring where the average home costs more than 30,000 yuan per square meter. One of his colleagues living several blocks away saves 1,000 yuan on dog registration because her home is outside the inner ring.

But at his parents' home, dog registration is only 100 yuan. "That's why I moved Dandan," Bao said.

Related costs like dog food, medicine and toys are also cheaper in the suburbs, he said.

Bao used to spend 500 yuan every month on Dandan as big dogs like huskies eat more and cost more to breed. His monthly bill includes 200 yuan for dog food, 150 yuan for baths and another 150 yuan for vitamins and medical care.

But after moving Dandan to the suburbs, life has gotten easier. "It's not like I have to starve to feed him. Out there, he also seems healthier and more outgoing," Bao said. His parents suggested he skip the expensive canned dog food and let Dandan eat with the other rural dogs.

Bao said many of his friends who have large-sized dogs often asked him about Dandan. "They also worry about how the government's policies are making their pets more expensive to address the dog problem," he said.

The dog problem

Shanghai's move may chase some dogs out of the downtown



Dog ownership is growing with the country's economic prosperity.

Wang Rongjian/IC Photo

area, but experts believe jacking up costs and killing pets is far from an effective solution.

At the end of 2009, the country had an estimated 60 million pet dogs in its 20 major cities according to statistics from the Beijing Stray Animals Rescue Center, a local non-government organization.

In Beijing, there were 600,000 registered pet dogs in 2009, with more than 1 million households owning pets, the center said.

But 50,000 pets, mainly dogs and cats, end up abandoned every year. "That's the problem," said Yvonne Wang, director of the rescue center who has been saving strays since 2005.

Wang said every country has stray animals, but China's stray dogs have it rougher.

There have been many cases where "professional teams" at the county level were deployed to capture and kill stray dogs to prevent the spread of rabies. Based on media reports, each reported case of rabies results in the slaughter of tens of thousands of dogs.

"Killing is not a scientific cure. It's indiscriminate slaughter," she said.

Wang said many countries have tried sophisticated ways to address the problems caused by stray animals. European nations tend to prefer a trap, neuter and release approach.

"It is an effective way to control the number of stray cats, and many countries are considering using it to control the number of stray dogs," she said.

But Wang said an effective system of collection and adoption would be a better solution.

"That's what we are trying to do," Wang said. "There are NGOs collecting and caring for stray dogs, but it is far from enough." The animals need a home.

Wang suggested the government make special laws and regulations to punish owners who abandon or abuse their pets.

"Stray dogs are not criminals. It's the humans who abandoned them that are to blame," she said.



Jingjing's faithfulness touched many as his owner's home burned.

IC Photo

Go East, gold diggers

Marrying rich Chinese as an investment?

China's rich are catching the world's attention. Investors with project ideas want their money; schools looking for endowment money want their children; foreign governments want to sell them passports; and, as *Forbes* recently reported, singles want their hand ... in marriage.



From left, Richard Lee, 44, younger son of Hong Kong entrepreneur Li Ka-Shing; Li Zhaohui, 30, chairman of Shanxi Haixin Iron & Steel Group; Lawrence Ho, 34, son of Macau entrepreneur Stanley Ho; Xu Yongan, 43, CEO of Hengdian World Studios; Mao Zhongqun, 41, CEO of Fangtai Group

CFP Photo

If you're a gal, what's the best approach to finding yourself in China in the admiring gaze of a Robin Li, CEO of the country's biggest online search engine Baidu, or Victor Koo, founder of leading video website Youku?

Russell Flannery, *Forbes*' Shanghai bureau chief, put his suggestions in a magazine's column: 2011 China Investment Guide, and how to marry a rich Chinese.

The guide cited Mina Hanbury Tension, author of the new book *Shanghai Girls: Uncensored & Unsentimental: How to*

Marry Up & Stay There, and divides the country's new rich into two types, the provincials and the city dwellers.

The provincials have made their money doing anything as unexciting as selling livestock and frozen meat or even cheap electronics, whereas city dwellers have made their money in manufacturing, property and investments.

Furthermore, Tension said there is a rising class of *fuerdai*, the second generation wealthy – young men in their early to late 20s who are due to inherit

their parents' business and have gotten used to spending huge sums. They are the ones driving around in the Maseratis and Ferraris in Beijing and Shanghai.

These are very different types and require different tactics. Tension said girls who want to approach the first group, the older generation, should be ultra-practical since all of them are married and most have second or third mistresses spread out over different cities.

However, being one of their girlfriends has its advantages: you

might get an apartment, a sports car and a credit card.

For the *fuerdai* and other youngsters, Tension said the best bet is to befriend his parents or extended family and get them to believe that you're the perfect girl who will save him from a possibly irresponsible, dissipated life.

Referring to a white guy marrying a mainland Chinese lady, Tension said she may not need you to be rich, but she does need you have some semblance of accomplishment, like degrees, suave world knowledge and devotion.

Men's cosmetics take off in China

More and more Chinese men are looking to the power of skin creams and anti-age serums to help them get ahead professionally, sparking a booming new market that has major cosmetics firms salivating.

Chinese men have fewer hang-ups than Western men about using skin care products – and keen customers, especially in urban areas, are even snapping up pots of foundation, toners and whitening creams traditionally bought by women.

Industry giants such as France's L'Oreal and German group Beiersdorf, which makes the Nivea line, are spending big on ads and distribution in China to conquer the promising market – and concocting new tailor-made products.

"It's a very dynamic market," Jackson Zhang, vice president of L'Oreal China, told AFP, saying that about 10 percent of Chinese men are already using skin care products specifically made for them.

The typical customer is an urban professional living not just in the capital Beijing or cosmopolitan Shanghai, but also in smaller cities nationwide.

"When Chinese men's income rises, in the beginning, they buy a good watch, then they move on to electronics... then they move to clothes, buy famous brands and finally they move to personal care products," Zhang explained.

"Men believe that using skin care products can give them a better competitive edge for their jobs, or for girls."

China will account for half of global growth in the men's skin care market in the 2009-2014 period, market intelligence firm Euromonitor said in a study released last November.

During those five years, the Chinese market is projected to expand by 28.7 percent, as compared with growth of just 5.7 percent in North America and 7.9 percent in western Europe, Euromonitor said.

In 2010, sales of men's skin care products soared 30 percent to \$280 million in China – ahead of North America, Euromonitor said, noting that the market had evolved in a few years to include "more sophisticated product lines offering anti-ageing, exfoliating and energy-boosting properties".

"Our customers are mainly white-collar workers, entrepreneurs, people whose salaries are above average," Ouyang Jiale, the young manager of a men's beauty salon in Beijing, told AFP.

"As the Chinese say, the better the image you project, the more money you will earn!"

Attitudes have changed about these so-called "city jade men" – the Chinese equivalent of metrosexuals who spend a great deal of time and money on their appearance.

Business has been so good that the spa can no longer accommodate its client base. Ouyang said he will open another flagship salon in September as well as a third location.

(Agencies)

The third eye

A feasible investment

By Huang Daohen

Ryan Chen, industrial researcher at Zhenai.com, an online dating site, said she recognizes that *Forbes*' article is a tongue-in-cheek take on marriage, but she said that rich Chinese actually are finding it increasingly difficult to find love.

"You may find it hard to believe, but it can be hard for millionaires to find love in China," Chen said. She specializes in catering to the expanding class of super-wealthy Chinese singles.

Chen said the reason is because

of their high standards.

Every month, Chen organizes a dating party where young female candidates are selected and dressed in wedding gowns.

The millionaires who want to attend the event have to pay. A diamond membership in Chen's club costs 30,000 yuan. The qualification for joining is also startling: a personal or family wealth of at least 2 million yuan, a superior background and good personal qualities.

Chen said Zhenai has more than 22 million registered members and has matchmaking consul-

tants and psychologists to tap the emerging market.

According to statistics from research firm iResearch, the Internet dating market reached 300 million yuan in 2008 and double in 2009 to 550 million yuan.

The company's business targets high-level clients. In 2009 the company held a luxury dating event in Shanghai where 20 single women and 20 single men met and danced in a luxury hotel. The ticket price was 50,000 yuan.

Chen said the party is a glimpse at the future of matchmaking. The

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences showed that by 2020, there will be 24 million young men lacking wives due to the country's gender imbalance.

Finding love could be really competitive, Chen said. "Imagine, then, a white girl coming in," she said. "It is highly possible they will be attracted to each other."

Chen said the Internet and social networking services provide convenience and are making the world smaller. "People can easily meet online and develop a relationship."

Background

The rise of the rich class

The country has seen a massive expansion in its rich class in the past five years, according to a Hurun report.

"The country's fortune is increasing at a skyrocketing speed and is converging in the rich class," said Rupert Hoogewerf, founder of the Hurun Rich List.

"The number of people with a personal wealth of more than 1 billion yuan has rapidly risen since 2004. Then, there were 100. In 2009, we discovered that 1,000 people are now in the club."

A spokesman for the *Forbes* China Rich List also said the threshold for being among the 400 richest people on the Chinese mainland rose from 1.22 billion yuan in 2008 to 2.05 billion yuan last year.

The growth in Chinese millionaires alone has attracted interest for multinational companies, including Deutsche Bank AG, which is planning to target more services to China's rich class.

According to other experts, the rich class is a group with only one thing on their mind: property.

A recent poll of wealthy people in Beijing and Shanghai by *Beijing Youth Daily* found most owned at least three properties, while many subscribe to the traditional belief that, if you have money, you should invest in property.

Some also had shares in listed companies that have thrived in the country's real estate-fueled stock market, the survey found.

"The most significant difference between the 400 richest people in the US and in China is that the real estate business owners have been

removed from the US list. Meanwhile, hundreds of their Chinese counterparts crowd China's lists," said Russell Flannery, *Forbes*' Shanghai bureau chief.

Despite the increasing fortunes, however, the rich list features mostly people in East China.

More than half of the richest people live in Beijing and Shanghai, as well as Guangdong and the provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Shandong, according to last year's Hurun report.

(Agencies)

State multinationals start global recruitment

By Zhao Hongyi

Following Spring Festival, many Chinese multinationals began recruiting. Among them, China Development Bank's (CDB) plans to recruit overseas interns from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University has angered many in the already tight labor market.

The bank's intern recruitment plan is offering 36 positions in the Beijing headquarters for 10 weeks and requires high standards of professional expertise in selling and developing financial products, financial relations and shipping manufacturing.

Asked why the bank is looking for interns from abroad, its spokesman said the bank aims to introduce new and creative ideas, products, marketing and management.

CDB's business covers infrastructures industry, pillar industries, international cooperation and grassroots financial indus-

try, which is why it is seeking interns with diverse experience.

The plan angered university students who were entering the labor market. The students are facing fierce competition for jobs due to the graduation rate. Many condemned the plan as discriminating against domestic professionals.

The press office of the bank said the recruitment is only a trial, and that it will expand to include students from China's top schools later on.

Over the past two decades, China has consolidated its state-owned enterprises in 129 huge conglomerates under the supervision and management of the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission.

The conglomerates are engaged in natural resource exploration, food, finance, infrastructure and defense. The commission aims to fur-

ther consolidate and privatize the companies.

CDB is not the first conglomerate to recruit overseas talents and professionals. Since 2000, the conglomerates have been trying to introduce new blood. In 2007, the commission recruited 22 overseas professionals to take critical positions in its huge corporations.

Last year, it recruited five general managers and CEOs for the Dongfeng Automobile, China Construction, China Travel Service (Hong Kong), State Nuclear Power Technology Corporation and Chinatex Corporation.

"It's a step we have to go through to bring our state-owned conglomerates to the world market," Li Rongrong, former chairman of the commission, said.

But the results seem unsatisfactory. Many foreign professionals do not integrate well into the cultures of the corporations and their job performance suffers as a consequence. More than 60 percent of overseas professionals leave

within three years.

By contrast, Chinese professionals, most of whom are old employees of the conglomerates, perform well after climbing to the top positions.

"The commission requires candidates to be familiar with the system of Chinese conglomerates, but who can be so familiar at once?" Zhu Boshan, CEO of the Shanghai-based Tacter Consulting, who has watched the process closely over the years.

"The commission needs to recruit those who understand the rules of the world market to lead Chinese corporations to the world stage," Zhu said.

Zhu said he understands why the commission has not changed its criteria: the conglomerates are looking for professionals with an understanding of both markets to influence and educate their existing management teams.

Best Buy's lesson from China

Cluttered beats curated

Sometimes it's better to be late to a party.

Late last month, the world's largest consumer-electronics retailer Best Buy decided to close all its stores in China. A review of the company's five-year venture in the world's biggest consuming market reveals many hard lessons.



Best Buy failed to make China adapt to its foreign sales model.

Liao Yifan/IC Photo

In 2006, when Best Buy made a splash in China, large domestic rivals had already spread their tentacles across the nation, the Wal-Marts of the world were entrenched, and massive PC malls – a sort of messy and hyperactive physical eBay – had already sprouted up across the landscape like mushrooms.

But a birds' eye view and a slow-go approach helped Best Buy navigate the country's retail trade and experiment without losing its signature blue shirt.

In China, Best Buy put away the company's orthodox retail approach. Instead, it benched its brand and decided to grow through acquisition and was only now slowly wooing customers and vendors towards the Best Buy way five years after arriving.

At the same time, what it learned in China may soon influence how it does business in the US.

Best Buy prides itself on having

knowledgeable and unbiased sales people who can help bewildered customers choose from a preferred selection of electronics, which run the gamut from iPads and computers to refrigerators and electric motorcycles.

But Chinese consumers aren't used to the Best Buy process. Nor do the majority of them want it – at least not right now. They've grown up shopping for electronics at cluttered mom-and-pop shops where business is fueled by word of mouth, or at big-box retailers such as Gome Electrical Appliances or Suning Appliance Group, where competing vendors display and sell their own massive array of wares.

Kal Patel, who headed Best Buy's Asia operations, said that early on, Best Buy experimented with a US-style store in Shanghai. "We curated everything. We made choices in rice cookers and choices in PCs," he says. But customers wanted the old system, where they "choose for them-

selves from thousands of things."

"What we learned, very crucially, is that in China you cannot make revolutionary change. You have to work at the pace of the Chinese consumer," he said.

But Patel said the China venture gave the company a way to "learn and understand the nuances" behind how Chinese consumers shop for electronics.

One big issue for all retailers in China, explained Professor Marshall Meyer, of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, is that Chinese consumers are extremely price conscious while also carrying "strong local preferences." They like lots of selection and the ability to touch products before they make a deal.

They also want the immense selection but still desire less-biased help in navigating the products.

"You have to retail the Chinese way," Meyer said.

(Agencies)

Sky train may relieve nation's gridlock

By Huang Daohen

Increasing traffic jams may cause headaches for some sitting behind the wheel, but for others they are a business opportunity.

On Monday, Netherland-based Air Train International announced in Beijing that it will introduce its new vehicle system H-Bahn, or hanging railway, in China.

The hanging rail system, first developed by Germany's Siemens, runs on four electric DC traction motors. Unlike the subway, its passenger cabins are suspended from an overhead track supported by removable iron pillars.

The sky trains, composed of four cabins, are said to ride at 50 kilometers per hour and be able to carry 75 passengers in each cabin, said Lin Youling, president of the China Business Unit of Air Train International, which introduced the technology.

Lin said the company aims to build 20 to 30 sky lines within the country in the next five years and a trial program has been launched in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province.

But few cities are adopting the system, despite years of success in several European countries.

Creative solutions to gridlock are not confined to the hanging rail system. Last year, a Shenzhen company proposed a 3D bus that runs above other vehicles.

The straddling bus spans two traffic lanes and puts passengers on an upper deck. It runs on solar and electric power and can travel at 40 kilometers per hour.

On Monday, construction began on a maglev train line between downtown Beijing and the suburban Mentougou District. The line will become the first of its kind in the country.

But the question is which of these solutions is best for the battle against traffic congestion, said Zhan Guoshu, a member of the CPPCC and former editor-in-chief of the *People's Daily* overseas edition.

Zhan said he is pessimistic about expanding the proposed hanging railway throughout the China market. "Local governments are cautious about investing in transportation methods that are still in the experimental phase," he said.

"It will take time to see which method fits best," he said.

Lack of upper-class culture leads to Chinese buying global

By Li Zhixin

Credit Lyonnais Securities Asia (CLSA) issued a report Monday forecasting that nearly 44 percent of the world's luxury goods will be purchased by Chinese over the next decade, when China will overtake the US as the world's biggest luxury market.

The CLSA conducted a survey of more than 340 Chinese consumers and 31 luxury agencies and found that 75 percent of interviewees are willing to pay higher prices for luxury goods. China's luxury consumers are predominately male and prefer to buy

high-grade watches and leatherwear.

The CLSA estimates that 16 to 17 percent of Chinese consumers frequently present high-end goods to their friends, colleagues and business partners as gifts. Jewelry and classic watches are still the favorite articles, and 24 percent interviewees said they feel comfortable accepting a 50,000 yuan watch.

As for why the Chinese luxury market's growth is so strong, the report said the swelling middle class makes demand for luxuries stronger, though China's per

capita gross domestic product is still far from that of the US.

It also reported that the main luxury manufacturers will strengthen their promotion in China and the prices of the luxuries might be higher than that of the overseas market due to the large domestic demand. The significant price increase – as much as 40 percent – of Chinese liquor year is the most obvious example.

However, Kong Shuhong, the deputy director of Cheungkei Research Center for Luxury Goods and Service, University

of International Business and Economics, said the major consumer group of luxury goods overseas is those between the ages of 40 to 60, as society's wealth is mainly in their hands, while in China, the major consumer group of luxuries is those between 25 to 45.

"This widespread phenomenon of buying expensive luxuries before becoming rich is abnormal," Kong said. "Although their desire can improve productivity, their irrational consumption can lead to waste for their family and society."

Comment

Lack of upper-class culture

Although there are many Chinese luxury consumers, they often blindly purchase luxuries. Few people are concerned about the connotation and history of the luxury brand. This is closely linked to the deficiency of upper-class culture.

Although China had its own luxury culture during ancient times, there was a clear hierarchy. Imperial and aristocratic families had abundant luxuries like ancient books, jades, classic furniture, super pure silks and chinaware,

while common people had fewer chances to possess such articles.

However, during the course of China's modern consumer revolution, Chinese people once denied upper-class luxuries are buying them up in spades. They've overcompensated. They're purchasing blindly.

— He Xiaohui, a writer

It's purely a matter of face

It is commonly known that Chinese people have emphasized face for thousands of years.

Luxuries, as tokens of status, satisfy

the need to show off among friends or other people. Luxury items are props for saving face.

Even if some people can't afford the expensive luxuries, they would like to use fake products to decorate themselves because they don't want to be labeled as out of style.

— Jiang Ping, dentist

Credit card overdraft consumption adds fuel to the flames

More and more college students are becoming ardent fans of luxury goods as

the need to keep up with the joneses has been growing.

Before, rich students could get money from their parents to buy luxuries to satisfy their need of seeking self-expression and showing off their status. Now, with the popularity of credit cards, overdraft consumption has given ordinary students the chance to enjoy luxuries before taking a job – and to make up for their loss of dignity in front of rich students.

— Zhang Jian, postgraduate student at Communication University of China

Girls' school, social need or a regression?

By Zhang Dongya

At the Two Sessions held in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, last week, representatives had a spirited debate on whether schools in China should be split into single-gender institutions. The discussion focused on Zhuhai Girls' Middle School, which is expected to open in September.

At the press conference, female teachers and students dressed in uniforms worn during the May 4th Movement in 1919 to emphasize the tradition of girls' schools in China.

China's first girls' school was set up by a missionary during the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), and the concept was later expanded in the Republic of China Period (1912-49). After the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, mixed gender schools became common.

Some girls' schools have reopened recently, including Shanghai No. 3 Girls' High School. There are more than 10 girls' schools in the country, including junior high and high schools.

People questioned whether the return of girls' schools is out of demand or representative of a historical regression.

The privately run Zhuhai Girls' Middle School plans to enroll 1,000 students in the first year, targeting middle school girls from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

The school will be built in Occidental style, and all its course settings and facilities are internationalized.

The principal, Wang Jiaye, said single-gender education aims to teach female students to be independent, intelligent and elegant.

The girls' school will offer some special courses, including training classes in scientific thinking, home economics, etiquette classes as well as bodybuilding and yoga.

Some Zhuhai residents said they are yearning for a return to tradition, while some hope their daughters can enroll in the school to avoid the perils of boy crushes.



Many believe a single-sex school would do more good than harm to students.

Photo provided by Yangcheng Evening News

Comment

Teach students according to their aptitude

I think girls' schools are beneficial during the junior high period. In some courses, like geometry, boys and girls excel at different speeds. Single-gender education accepts that there are differences between boys and girls, and can tailor the education to match those differences. We should be open-minded and tolerant of the idea. It is good for this country's educational diversity.

— Zhu Xu, media commentator

Narrow and retrogressive

The girls' school in late Qing was born because girls were not allowed to enter other kinds of schools. Even in the girls' school, female students had a lot of restraints. Their courses were limited to housework and female etiquette. Zhuhai girls' school sounds like moving backwards.

The girls' school restricts communication between girls and boys during a crucial time in their social development, which will affect them in the future.

— Liu Weibing, journalist and media commentator

More harm than good

A single-gender school would do more harm than good since potential psychological problems of its students may be harder to detect. Teachers and parents should watch out for this.

— Wu Zhongkui, vice president of Beijing Normal University Zhuhai Branch

Francophonie promotes influence of French-speaking cultures

By Han Manman

The 16th Francophonie festival, an annual month-long celebration that brings the best of French culture to China, kicked off yesterday with a French film festival.

Organized by 28 embassies in China, this year's festival will encompass more than 100 activities in 15 cities, including movies, musicals, lectures, exhibitions and readings, of which about 30 will be staged in Beijing. The events are all free and open to the public.

"It is a collective project that seeks to enhance cultural diversity, with each of the 28 participating countries contributing," said Marc Kohen, one of the festival organizers and director of Wallonia-Brussels Delegation, which represents the French-speaking part of Belgium.

Kohen said the theme of this year's festival is solidarity, one of the founding values of the Francophonie.

"For this festival, solidarity takes the form of cultural diversity," Kohen said.

"The Francophonie festival is a welcoming space for all cultures that want to continue to exist and express themselves without imposing the model of a dominant Anglo-Saxon culture, specifically American culture – Hollywood, hamburgers and Coca-Cola," he added.

Kohen said the festival in his home country of Belgium is very popular. Every March, various activities are held around the country.

"But what I see here is that the Francophonie festival is growing every year, in Beijing and other provinces," he said. "Every year, people in more cities are aware of our activities."

Kohen said he hopes the festival can attract more Chinese people and get them interested in French-speaking cultures.

There are currently about 100,000 learners of French in China – a number that is increasing. More than 90 universities have a department of French studies. There are now 13 Alliances Françaises on the Chinese mainland.

Kohen said the film festival, musical performances and cartoon exhibitions are the highlights of this year's festival.



Ivory Coast's embassy will hold a festival to show its unique culture.



More than 100 events are on the Francophonie festival's lineup.

Photos provided by French Embassy

Film festival shows cultural diversity

Cinema has always been a popular form of entertainment. In cinemas around China, audiences can see the latest films and box office hits, but mainly in Chinese or English. Movies from places outside Hollywood or China are rarely found.

The Francophonie film festival provides audiences the chance to learn more about movies from French-speaking countries. The films all have both Chinese and English subtitles.

Thirty films from French-speaking countries, including Switzerland, Belgium and Canada, will be showcased.

"The diversity of movies is interesting for me," said Wang Xinyin, a festivalgoer.

Wang, as a self-described fan of French culture, said "French movies in general are very different from movies around the world, and this is also part of the diversity. The way they are produced and financed is very different. They are not made to be big box-office draws, but to send a message. It's more cultural than commercial."

She said the film festival provides people like her the rare chance to glimpse what life is like in some smaller French-speaking countries.

"From the film list, I noticed that places like Guinea-Bissau and Mauritius will bring their well-known films to China," Wang said, adding that she has never seen films from those countries and is very interested.

During the film festival, a delegation of directors and artists will visit Beijing to introduce their movies and conduct classes.

In Beijing, the film festival will last until March 31, with movies shown in four venues: the French Cultural Center, the Polish and Romanian embassies, and Beijing University of Languages and Cultures.



Singers from different French-speaking countries will showcase French songs in different ways.

Music brings countries together

As a brochure for the Francophonie's musical performance puts it: "If you enjoy the elegance of Parisian women, the charm of cobbled streets or champagne, then you will enjoy the enchanting sounds of French music. In Geneva, Montreal, Brussels, Paris or Beijing, French songs can be heard in many ways."

Beijing Alliances Française (BAF), the embassies of Switzerland

and Canada, the Wallonia-Brussels Delegation and the Quebec office in China are jointly organizing two musical performances at Yugongyishan and Beijing Foreign Studies University on March 18 and 19.

BAF said the participating performers are all "unique musical characters." They include Aliose, a band from Switzerland that will share its pure and enchanting sound; French musi-

cian-singer Arnaud Fleurent-Didier, with his impeccable three-piece suit; Cloe du Trefle, a young composer from Brussels who mixes classical and electronic music; and Canadian singer Alex Nevsky, who brings dance beats.

Free tickets are available at the Alliance Française in French Cultural Center starting March 10. For more information, call bilingual hotline at 5139 4057.

Background of Francophonie festival

The French-speaking world is gathering 75 countries via the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF).

Each year, the Francophonie festival is held globally to celebrate French language, culture and friendship.

It takes place around March

20, the day the OIF was created. The festival is open to any individual or organization from countries or regions that want to celebrate the French language and promote cultural diversity.

This year's participating countries in China are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cameroon,

Canada, Quebec, Cyprus, Ivory Coast, Croatia, France, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Tunisia and Vietnam.

Other upcoming events

The Francophonie feast

This is a festive and popular cultural event organized by the Ivory Coast embassy's to celebrate the Francophonie in China, particularly its cultural diversity, with music, dance and parades. Embassies of French-speaking countries in Beijing will hold exhibitions on the cultural identities of their countries.

Date: March 19, 11 am – 5 pm
Venue: Ivory Coast embassy

Francophone choir

French-speaking singers from 10 countries form Maurice Ravel, a choir that will present songs of different styles and languages.

Date: March 19, 2 pm
Venue: French Cultural Center

Documentary Probing the Happiness on the Border of China

Western Returned Scholars Association will present the documentary *Probing the Happiness on the Border of China*, directed by Yushu.

Two of the eight episodes of the documentary will be screened in Chinese with French subtitles: "Chinese Tongue with Blue Eyes" is the story about a Russian Chinese living on the border between Russia and China; "Gods on the Ancient Tea-horse Trail" focuses on Christian Tibetans on the border of India.

The director will be on site to talk about her experience of producing the film.

Date: Sunday March 20, 2011, 9:15 pm

Venue: Western Returned Scholars Association conference center

Website: coesa.cn/lffh/

The first China-EU Year of Youth held in Beijing

By Chu Meng

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and the European Union's newly appointed ambassador to China, Markus Ederer, attended the opening ceremony of the China-EU Year of Youth in Beijing on Wednesday, joining more than 500 young people from China and the EU in downtown's Capital Museum.

The yearlong youth exchange campaign is the first of its kind between China and the EU since the establishment of diplomatic ties, and is also the largest-ever China-EU cultural exchange program.

The program aims to encourage young people from China and the EU to build a brighter future for bilateral strategic partnerships.

"The program has revealed the resolution of both Chinese and European leaders to establish a brighter platform for younger generations to communicate, to interact and to cooperate with one another," said European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso in a video that was aired at the ceremony. "Youngsters from both sides will bring vitality and energy to bilateral relations through this platform."

"The relations between China and all EU member countries will be more vibrant in the future and full of hope," Wen said.

Wen hopes that young people from both sides will always be brave in pursuing innovation and the truth. He also encouraged them to learn from each other in a frank and open spirit, in a bid



100 youngsters from Europe and China co-launching the first EU-China Year of Youth program in Beijing.

CFP Photo

to jointly create a better future for China-EU ties.

Wen and Barroso jointly initiated the China-EU Year of Youth during the 12th EU-China summit held in 2009. The Year of Youth offers an interactive platform for European and Chinese young people to enhance mutual understanding and friendship and also inject vitality to China-EU relations.

Along with the opening ceremony in Beijing, 100 European youth participants from 27 EU member countries, selected from the European Youth Forum in 2010, were immersed in two-day

discussions with Chinese youth on topics such as culture, education, volunteering, creativity and environmental protection starting Tuesday.

"We had excellent discussions on possible cooperation projects, ranging from environmental protection, world heritage to art and intellectual property," said Pierre Arlaud, a member of a EU youth delegation.

"I feel there is a strong will from both sides to deepen understanding and forge a stronger partnership," he added.

The opening ceremony was the first in a series of exchange

activities that will be held throughout the year in China and Europe. The events include cultural seminars, volunteer service conferences, youth summer camps and TV debates.

The yearlong program was co-hosted by the Communist Youth League of China, All-China Youth Federation and the European Commission. The initiative aims to promote intercultural dialogue and strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between young people in China and the EU, as well as encouraging them to support the development of China-EU relations.

Finish ambassador promotes healthy food to Chinese consumers

By Chu Meng

On Wednesday, Finnish ambassador Lars Backstrom said he will help Chinese consumers eat healthier: a leading health food manufacturer in Finland is looking for Chinese business partners.

Unlike many embassy press conferences, which are rigid and solemn affairs, the Finnish ambassador added some levity to his press conference by handing out yogurt, milk, fruit drinks and snacks brought from Finland.

"I had them when I was back in Finland," he said. "I'm in my 50s and have a little bit of an elevated cholesterol level, which could gradually lead to cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases such as heart attacks."

According to the Beijing Health Ministry, because of more diverse food choices and the invasion of more international eating habits, including more meats, fats and dairy products - coupled with less exercise - more than 155 million adults in China have elevated cholesterol levels, and by 2012 more than 100 million will be diagnosed with heart disease.

In Chinese cuisine, some uniquely popular foods actually spike cholesterol levels. Many other signature Chinese dishes use excessive seasoning.

"Organs, which are an extremely popular Beijing snack food, are especially high in cholesterol. Peking duck and lamb hotpot contain a high level of cholesterol as well," Backstrom said.

China's aging population is especially susceptible to diseases related to elevated cholesterol levels.

In Finland, pioneering food manufacturers lead the world by developing low-cholesterol foods with natural plant-based ingredients.

Backstrom said he would very much like to help interested and capable Chinese food producers cooperate with Finnish partners to create low-cholesterol products.

"With collaboration between Finnish manufacturers and Chinese food companies, we will be given a convenient and flexible solution to address the growing consumer need for cholesterol-lowering foods and beverages and innovating products that exclusively cater to the taste buds of Chinese people," said Mikko Laavainen, commercial director of Raisio Group, a food producer.

The ambassador said that normally in Finland, the government works with health professionals, the public, food manufacturers and other organizations to examine lifestyle choices to improve public health.

High cholesterol was among the issues considered, as it was already recognized as one of the significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease, the main cause of death in Finland.

Italy's 150th anniversary of unification celebration launched in embassy

By Chu Meng

Cultural Counselor of the Italian Embassy in China, Barbara Alighiero, launched a celebration of Italy's 150 years of unification on Tuesday and extended a warm invitation to people to visit her home country.

March 17 will be the 150th anniversary of Italian unification. From this month until November, "Experience Italy," a series of themed activities, celebrations, art exhibitions and shows, will take place in Torino and the Piedmont region of northwest Italy, the cultural counselor said.

"It is offering people from China, as well as the world, another reason to travel to Italy, to get to know its culture and people," she said.

She added that with extensive experience hosting international events, from the 2006 Winter Olympics to the biennial Salone del Gusto - the largest food festival in the world - Torino has become accustomed to greeting guests.



Italian history professor Giulio Machetti (middle) with the cultural counselor of the Italian embassy, Barbara Alighiero (right)

Photo provided by Luo Rui

The embassy in Beijing will also hold activities such as movies, shows and art exhibitions.

Giulio Machetti, a professor of contemporary history at the University of Napoli, gave a lecture introducing the origin, transformation and unification of this nation-state to Italian students at international schools in Beijing and Chinese university students

who major in Italian.

In 1861, nine separate kingdoms were unified to form what people know today as Italy. Torino was the first national capital. Vittorio Emanuele II of the Savoy house became the first Italian King.

Machetti introduced Italian development chronologically, referring to significant dates

in modern Italian history and reporting them in the context of national unity. He also described what has drawn Italians together or divided them.

He said the dream of unity cannot completely mask differences in a country where regional conflicts still exist.

"The idea behind the birthday celebrations was to show that Italy has overcome its traditional regional divides, especially between the wealthy north and the underdeveloped, mob-ridden south," the professor said.

Since 2009, Machetti has moved his academic concentration away from theoretical history studies to a 100-year-old block of Italian buildings in Tianjin. There, he devotes himself to restoring the buildings and educating others about the historic value of the area.

Near the Marco Polo Square, an Italian-style area near Tianjin Haihe River was built in 1902 and remains the only well-preserved complex of Italian-style architecture in Asia.

Basketball league calls for players

By Liang Meilan

March Madness in Beijing tips off on March 19 in the form of a recreational but competitive league open to all skill levels.

The league is organized by Mashup. Players should form their own teams – maximum 12 people – and register as a team on mashupasia.com.

Games will be held on Saturdays for eight weeks at the newly renovated indoor basketball court at Ditan Sports Stadium.

The final week will be a single-elimination tournament for teams that qualify. Games will be played in 20-minute halves with a three-minute halftime. Referees will be provided by the league. An awards party will give prizes from sponsors and partners and will happen at the end of the season.

Basketball leagues for expats have formed in the past, but there have been fewer of them recently despite high demand.

"I think people will notice the organization and quality of Mashup's league right away. If leagues aren't well-organized, no one will have fun," said Yoyao Hsueh, the American founder of Mashup.

Mashup organizes 10 sports leagues in five different sports throughout the year, with some tournaments mixed in during the summer. Leagues include foot-

ball, bowling, basketball, dodge ball and tennis. Tournaments include beach volleyball, kickball and dodge ball.

Mashup has been in charge of running a flag football league since 2009, which is its biggest. Players go out once a week to play games against other teams.

The social aspect of the football league and other events reflects the charm of Mashup: it is all about fun through competition.

"We don't play games loosely without standardized rules. A system is drafted in place to create equally competitive teams, making games more fun," Hsueh said.

Mashup brings together people from diverse backgrounds, too.

"Past players and new players are all mixed into one team; expats and Chinese are all mixed into one team. Now we are a big family," Hsueh said.

Players are from many different industries and professions, so the league also serves as a good opportunity for networking.

This year, Mashup is planning to provide a variety of social events, big and small, including happy hours and league parties.

Mashup just held a Super Bowl Party on February 7 in conjunction with the National Football League China.



Mashup, which organizes a flag football league, is seeking teams for its basketball league.
Photo provided by Mashup

Local and expat children improve their English through performance



Twenty-five students perform Treasure Island at No. 4 Middle School.

Photos provided by Beijing Playhouse



Face-painting



Students rehearsing

After two weeks of rehearsals, Beijing Playhouse's Broadway English Camp, designed for children ages 6 to 14, held its performance of *Treasure Island* on February 19 at No. 4 Middle School. The show was led by 25 students and watched by as many as 100 people.

The English camp aims not only at improving young Beijinger's English speaking skills through drama, but also helping them learn about theater and having fun. Through acting, sing-

ing, dancing, making props, painting sets and designing costumes, the students gain experience doing everything from auditions to rehearsals to opening night.

Theater camps have been in Beijing for the last four years, and offered twice throughout the year. The next camp will present *The Wizard of Oz*. Auditions are on March 12. Anyone interested should contact performance@beijingplayhouse.com.

(By Wei Ying)

Event

Kizomba workshop

International Dance Teachers Association's Paris Allen, from the UK, will lead a workshop for kizomba, a dance that is a fusion of French Caribbean zouk and Angolan samba. It is similar to tango but it's not as strict in terms of body movement, making it more laid back than and intimate; it is slower and more sensual than the salsa. All skill levels are welcomed.

Where: Latinize club, 137/B, Building D, Chaowai SOHO, 6 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: March 4-6, 1:30-10:00 pm

Tel: 5900 2589

Cost: 100 yuan for one and a half hours

Discussion on authentic Beijing

Sidney Rittenberg, the legendary American journalist, interpreter and scholar who lived in China from 1944 to 1979 and who is now 90 years old, will lead a panel themed "The soul of Beijing," discussing the authentic aspects of the city in the past and today.

Where: Capital M, 3/F, 2 Qianmen Pedestrian Street, Dongcheng District

When: March 5, starts 3 pm

Tel: 6702 2727

Cost: 65 yuan (10 yuan for children and students)

Early childhood musical education program

Music Together of Micho Education, an institution promoting early childhood education, is offering weekly classes for children under 6. A free demo class can be scheduled in advance. The classes are open at three locations.

Where: Room 16A1, Building 10, Jingda Apartment, 11 Chaoyanggongyuan Xi Xu, Chaoyang District

Claire's Music Studio, Room L507, Euro Plaza, 99 YuXiang Lu, Tianzhu Town, Shunyi District

The Familier Center, 6 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Daily except for Monday and Tuesday, 10 am – 5:15 pm

Tel: 15210058553

Cost: (to be checked)

Classical apple pie making

The Fig Tree pastry school is presenting how to make a classical apple pie using a secret recipe designed by chef Lin Zhong this weekend. Attendees can use all materials and equipment in the school. Students should bring their own containers to take the pie home or buy a 10-yuan paper box from the school.

Where: The Fig Tree, Unit 702, Building A, Chaowai SOHO, 6B Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: March 6, 2-5 pm

Tel: 13810071442

Cost: 550 yuan, 650 yuan for two people sharing ingredients

(By Liang Meilan)

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiyang@ynet.com

My girlfriend and I would like to get a car, but I want to visit a real shop rather than looking online, because I find Chinese websites difficult to navigate. Any recommendations?

Here are some popular secondhand car shops in Beijing:

1. Asian Games Village Car Trading Market
Where: 25 Anding Lu, Anwai Dajie, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6443 5320
2. Beifang Car Trading Market
Where: 81 Fengguan Lu, Fengtai District
Tel: 6382 4466
3. Zhonglian Car Trading Market
Where: 1 Bagou, Haidian District
Tel: 8261 1129
4. Beijing International Car Trading Services Garden
Where: Gucheng Xi Lu, Shijingshan District
Tel: 8892 1513

My friend just moved to an apartment in Dongzhimen. Is there a shop nearby where she can get stuff for the kitchen?

Try the vegetable markets on Chaoyangmen Nei Xiaojie, where vendors sell bowls and chopsticks. A pricier option is a furniture store called Illinois on the fourth floor of Kenzo Plaza near the Dongzhimen subway station.

I want to learn Yunnan and Sichuan cooking. Where can I get English cookbooks for that?

We recommend *Land of Plenty*, written by Fuxia Dunlop, a foreign correspondent for the BBC, who attended a culinary institute in Sichuan Province. You can order it through Amazon. (By Liang Meilan)

Beijing opens door to quality talent in six new industries

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing municipality bureau announced this week its plan to introduce high-quality professionals and talents from other provinces and countries.

The bureau is targeting industries such as IT, new energy, new material, automobile manufacturing and assembly, bio-pharmaceuticals and creative culture.

The municipal bureau of human resources and social security recognizes the city is badly in need of more professionals and talents.

Over the last decade, the bureau has helped introduce more than 35,000 professionals

to the city's high-tech industries.

In 2010, the bureau helped introduce 741 qualified engineers and researchers, of which 147 were senior managerial talents, to industries in the high-tech park in Zhongguancun in northwest Beijing.

The bureau issues working permits and residence permits and supervises the welfare of labor in the capital. It draws up initial quarterly plans and five-year plans to help industries attract quality labor and turn the city into a high-tech center in China.

In the last quarter of each year, companies and factories in the city can submit their needs to

the bureau, which sorts out the priorities and forms a new plan for the next year.

The bureau makes sure newcomers can start work as soon as possible but also imposes high criteria for those introduced to new jobs.

Residency status of those who are guilty of academic fraud or resume deception will be immediately nullified.

"Our plan focuses more on the needs of our city's industries rather than the place we get our professionals and talents," said Song Fengshou, spokesman of the bureau.

Song said his bureau is willing

to seek more foreigners because companies can now afford to employ them.

"To many state-owned enterprises and high-tech companies, salary is not an issue now," Song said.

The companies and enterprises in Zhongguancun High-tech Science Park are more interested in young professionals with working experience.

They hope authorities can loosen employment restrictions so that more outsiders can be employed, said Yang Zhiqiang, deputy governor of Haidian District where the science park is situated.

Electric cabs off and running in Yanqing suburb

By Zhang Dongya

The first batch of 50 electric taxis were put into use in Yanqing County, a suburb of Beijing, on Tuesday.

All the new green-and-white cabs are powered by electricity instead of gas and designed with bigger interiors than average cabs, which can accommodate five passengers.

The electric power consumption of the taxi is 15 kilowatts per hundred kilometers. It can run for 140 kilometers on average for every two hours it is charged. That means within Yangqing County, the cab can run an entire day on two hours of charging.

The price is 5 yuan for trips less than 3 kilometers and 1.5 yuan for each additional kilometer. The low price is to encourage more people to take these environmentally friendly cabs.

Currently there is only one recharge station - in Yanqing



The first batch of 50 electric taxis in Yanqing

Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

County - so most drivers won't go too far beyond that.

A panel will warn drivers when the battery is getting low. The car will gradually lose speed to protect its motor.

The recharge station, west of

Yanqing Train Station, has 25 stations that can charge 50 cabs at the same time. Another seven recharge stations are under development.

There are 2,000 new-energy vehicles in Beijing, with another 5,000 to hit roads before the end of

the year, including 500 taxis.

The trial program for electric cabs is expected to propel private purchases of the new-energy cars. It is estimated that by the end of 2012, there will be 30,000 privately owned new-energy cars.

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Dance of a dark

50-year-old Japanese performing art s



*Rebellion of the Body by
Tatsumi Hijikata*
©Tado Nakatani

**“Butoh is
a corpse
standing
straight
up in a
desperate
bid for
life.”**



Yukio Waguri

Two male dancers created a new world of modern dance in the 20th century: Vaslav Nijinsky and Tatsumi Hijikata.

On May 29, 1912, Russian ballet dancer Nijinsky became a legend with his 12-minute performance of *The Afternoon of a Faun* in Paris. He danced barefoot, rejecting the limits of ballet, and left his audience with its first glimpse of modern dance.

But 47 years later, Japanese choreographer Hijikata did so much more. *Kinjiki*, his first butoh performance in Tokyo, stunned viewers with its raw violence and sexuality.

“Although many people criticized it in 1959, it was *Kinjiki* that marked a new era for Japanese performing arts and gave us a bridge to the world’s stage,” says Takashi Morishita from Tatsumi Hijikata Archive at the Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration of Keio University.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the butoh founder’s passing. To commemorate the event, the Japan Foundation is organizing a series of culture events in Beijing, including screenings, lectures, exhibitions and a performance.

Last Sunday, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art screened two films about Hijikata’s performances – 1968’s *Rebellion of the Body* and 1972’s *Story of Smallpox*. The screenings were followed by a lecture by Morishita.

When he was a college student at Waseda University, Morishita went to the Asbestos Hall to borrow film in 1972. It was the base of butoh as established by Hijikata. Many of the young people studying butoh were working there and living together in a pseudo-commune.

Mirishita took notes of what Hijikata said when he taught at the studio. One day, Hijikata asked him to assist in the production of his new performance, *Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons*.

It was the first time Mirishita experienced butoh. Afterward, he worked in the studio for six years until Hijikata closed it after a Paris performance in 1978.

“Some European critics said the birth of butoh was due to atomic explosions, but I disagree. Hijikata didn’t join the army in World War II and didn’t participate in any political movement,” Mirishita says.

Born in Akita, a prefecture of northern Japan, Hijikata had a poor childhood. He moved to Tokyo in 1952, the year in which the American occupation of Japan ended. But the city was still in ruins.

He lived with poor people and survived on petty theft, but he never forgot his dream of becoming a dancer.

Influenced by American movies and music, he first planned to be a jazz dancer. Quickly, he realized that he would never excel in the art, so he switched to ballet and flamenco.

But these existing dances were not his real pursuit.

Confused about his future, Hijikata found the French writer Jean Genet, who also lived as a vagabond and petty criminal in his early years.

Before using his real name, Hijikata adopted “Tatsumi Genet” as a stage name. He likened himself to Genet, thinking dance would be his redemption as writing was Genet’s.

His new dance did away with the conventions and techniques of the old and reflected his obsession with death, violence and sexual acts. He once said, “Butoh is a corpse standing straight up in a desperate bid for life.”

After Genet, Hijikata moved on to read the Marquis de Sade, Comte de Lautreamont and Jean Paul Sartre, who inspired many of Hijikata’s early works.

“The 1960s were a turbulent time in Japan, but underground culture thrived. Students protested the US-Japan Security Treaty and many artists were anxious to break down the old and create new art forms. Hijikata was a spiritual leader in that field,” Mirishita says.

Many Japanese intellectuals were involved in the development of butoh. One was Yukio Mishima, who was nominated three times for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Hijikata borrowed the name of the novel by Mishima, exploring the taboos of homosexuality and pedophilia. Although the dance did not follow the plot of the novel, Mishima visited the studio to support Hijikata and butoh.

Mishima’s suicide in 1970 was a great shock to Hijikata. He made his last performance on the day Mishima committed suicide and stopped creating new works for four years.

In 1983, Hijikata reopened the Asbestos Hall, the training ground of many butoh masters such as Akira Kasai, Min Tanaka and Yukio Waguri. He began working to promote the art outside Japan.

After returning to the studio to plan more performances, Hijikata died of liver cancer at age 57 on January 21, 1986.

After his death, there was a plan to set up an archive collecting all of his works. Mirishita helped establish and manage the archive. “Hijikata’s death was a tragedy for the development of butoh. The art lost its spiritual leader. Many butoh choreographers have left Japan, and few among our youth are interested in studying this art,” he says.

Butoh companies struggle to survive in Japan. Few theaters are willing to produce their performances, and few artists are interested in creating new works.

But despite the worries, Mirishita sees a bright future for butoh. “Many European and Asian countries have butoh festivals. The artists draw inspiration from other art forms to give new life to butoh. The works I have seen by Chinese contemporary artists are full of energy. I hope they will give butoh performers new inspiration,” Mirishita says.



Yukio Waguri

©Ikegami Nao

soul

Weeks revival

By He Jianwei

Butoh is an enigma. Born in Japan 50 years ago as a new form of physical expression, it has since overturned conventional concepts of dance.

Before settling on the name, its founder called it a "dance of darkness." The performance is violent and sexual, irrational and frightening. It is improvised, but it is also choreographed in stylized routines.

Its unique and revolutionary style attracted many European artists when Japanese dancers spread it to Europe 30 years ago. Many European and Asian countries have since established butoh companies and have festivals for butoh lovers.

But few young Japanese elect to learn butoh. The current aging generation of masters believe that even without young blood, the 50-year-old tradition must live on.



Tatsumi Hijikata's new dance did away with the conventions and techniques of the old and reflected his obsession with death, violence and sex.

©Tado Nakatani

Photos provided by The Japan Foundation

"Many European and Asian countries have butoh festivals. The artists draw inspiration from other art forms to give new life to butoh. The works I have seen by Chinese contemporary artists are full of energy. I hope they will give butoh performers new inspiration."



Yukio Waguri is an inheritor of Hijikata's spirit of butoh.

©Ikegami Naoya

Crime fiction headlines Bookworm's festival



Photo by Sam Christie

By He Jianwei

During the next two weeks, more than 70 writers, journalists and publishers from home and abroad will attend this year's Bookworm Literary Festival, which opens tonight at Bookworm locations in Beijing, Suzhou and Chengdu.

This year's festival will focus on crime fiction, drawing the famous Argentine master of mysteries, Guillermo Martinez.

Martinez found worldwide recognition in 2003 with *The Oxford Murders*, for which he was awarded the Planeta Prize for Spanish-language literature.

The thriller is narrated by an Argentinean student majoring in mathematics who investigates a series of murders together with his professor of logic. The novel's serial killer says he will stop if someone can decode the next mathematical symbol in the pattern of clues he leaves at murder sites.

As a successor to Jorge Louis Borges and Umberto Eco, Martinez shows that murder mystery writing can have style and substance.

Martinez is also a mathematician. After being awarded his Ph.D in mathematical logic at the University of Buenos Aires,

he studied for two years in a postdoctoral position at the Mathematical Institute of Oxford University.

The Oxford Murders is not the first novel to combine mathematics with murder mystery, but many critics say it is one of the first to do it successfully by appealing to readers who have less knowledge about mathematics.

At "Murder Ink: a crime writing workshop" on March 5, Martinez will share his process of creation, including creating a central concept, crafting narrative and pulling the strings of intrigue and suspense.

The next day he will deliver a speech titled "The Perfect Murder," discussing his body of work and the confluence of logic, crime and narrative.

Spanish director Alex de la Iglesia adapted *The Oxford Murders* into a film of the same title in 2008. On March 7, it will be screened at Institute Cervantes.

After the screening, Martinez will have a talk with Chinese crime writer A Yi about the links between mystery, mathematics and literature.

Unlike Martinez, A Yi's background is related more directly to crime fiction.

A graduate of a Jiangxi Province police academy, A Yi worked as an officer for five years before training his sights on detective fiction.

His first book, *Gray Stories*, is a collection of 30 short stories published in 2008, revealing the darkness of man from the perspective of a policeman.

His second book, *Bird Saw Me*, pushes the genre's boundaries.

A stranger who stabs and kills six townspeople within two hours is mysteriously acquitted of the charge. He seldom talks with other people about the night's events, but one day while drunk, he says that a bird witnessed him – whether that bird witnessed his innocence or guilt remains a mystery.

After the publication of his second book, A Yi was recognized as one of the country's most promising crime writers. "His passion and faithfulness toward writing and life can humiliate most famous writers," Bei Dao, famous poet and writer, said after he read *Bird Saw Me*.

On March 15, A Yi will talk about the China's landscape of crime fiction and how crime writers see social issues through the mystery story.

Letters between two Bohemian souls

By Charles Zhu

The two decades of letters passed between Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac provide readers with a rare insight into their thoughts and Bohemian way of life. *Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters* includes 200 private letters edited by Bill Morgan and David Stanford, two thirds of which are being published for the first time ever.

Their correspondence began in 1944, when Ginsberg was a precocious 19-year-old; they stopped in 1963 when Ginsberg's two letters to Kerouac went unanswered due to Kerouac's disappearance into an alcoholic haze. The letters are a testament to the bond of friendship they shared.

The letters are sharp, lucid, funny, tender, gossipy and absolutely honest in their presentation of the men's ambitions. They show that Kerouac and Ginsberg depended on each other for encouragement and advice and had well founded ideas of each, with Kerouac declaring his poet friend would be a "Jewish National Hero."

Each was an important critic of the other's work. Kerouac as a novelist had a very high opinion of himself, likening his *On the Road* to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Ginsberg took the wind out of his sales by calling *On the Road* "crazy but salvageable."

Kerouac wrote *On the Road* with a

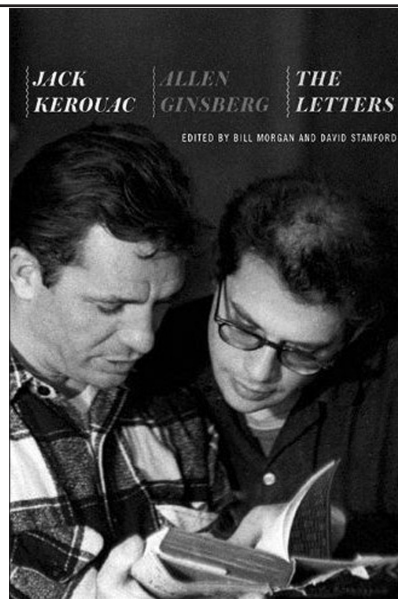
120-foot-long roll of tracing paper fed continuously through his typewriter. He called his method "blowing" or "sketching," and told Ginsberg: "You just have to purify your mind and let it pour the words (which effortless angels of the vision fly when you stand in front of reality) . . . and slap it all down shameless, willy-nilly, rapidly until sometimes I got so inspired I lost consciousness I was writing."

The letters also reveal that Kerouac suggested the title for Ginsberg's most famous poem, "Howl," and led the cheering crowd when Ginsberg introduced it at the Six Gallery in San Francisco on October 7, 1955.

In 1961, Ginsberg sagely advised Kerouac to be wary of becoming a symbol for the so-called Beat Generation: "You have too much else to offer to be tied down to that and have to talk about that every time someone asks your opinion of weather." For Kerouac, his favorite review of *On the Road* concluded with the words "I wish I was young again."

Ginsberg's letters were so tender and jubilant that Kerouac once predicted to their mutual friend Lawrence Ferlinghetti: "Someday 'The Letters of Allen Ginsberg to Jack Kerouac' will make America cry." They were bounded by what Ginsberg called "the secret knowledge of reciprocal depths."

In one of Ginsberg's retrospective let-



Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: *The Letters*

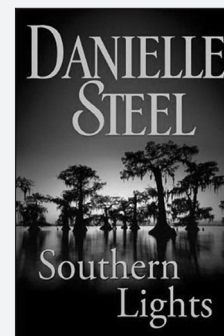
Edited by Bill Morgan and David Stanford, 528pp, Viking Adult, \$35

ters, he said wistfully: "Art has been for me, when I did not deceive myself, a meager compensation for what I desire." As a poet, he said he was worn, enervated and world-weary. "I am sick of this damned life!"

Kerouac died of cirrhosis at 47. Ginsberg became a public figure, paying tribute to his friend's memory by helping found the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics in Boulder, Colorado. It continues to draw those with a burning literary vocation.

CNPIEC Bookstore book listing

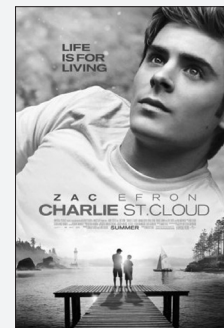
The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends these new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.



Southern Light

By Danielle Steel, 416pp, Random House, 55 yuan

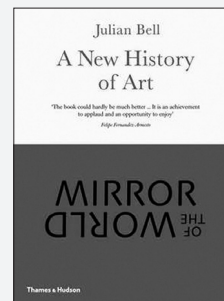
Eleven years have passed since Alexa Hamilton left the South behind, fleeing the pain of her ex-husband's betrayal and the cruelty of his prominent Charleston family. Now she is a top prosecutor and the single mother of a 17-year-old daughter. But everything changes when her daughter begins receiving threatening letters soon after taking a new case.



Charlie St. Cloud

By Ben Sherwood, 320pp, Bantam, 55 yuan

In a snug New England fishing village, Charlie St. Cloud tends the lawns and monuments of an ancient cemetery where his younger brother, Sam, is buried. After surviving the car accident that claimed his brother's life, Cloud is graced with an extraordinary gift: He can see, talk to and even play catch with Sam's spirit. Into this magical world comes Tess Carroll, a captivating woman training for a solo sailing trip around the globe. Fate steers her boat into a treacherous storm that propels her into Cloud's life.



Mirror of the World: A New History of Art

By Julian Bell, 496pp, Thames & Hudson, 428 yuan

Bell tells a vivid and compelling history of human artistic achievements, from prehistoric stone carvings to the latest video installations. He uses a variety of objects to reveal how art is a product of our shared experience and how, like a mirror, it can reflect the human condition.

(By He Jianwei)

Woodworkers of the city, unite!

By Wang Yu

Nothing says manly like working with wood, remodeling your home or tinkering with your car. But with car and home ownership far off dreams, carpentry is the only option for young men seeking a masculine outlet.

From elaborate computer chassis to radio sets, local woodworkers are showing off their talents by customizing the home essentials. But with apartment space at a premium, some fans have started at a workshop on the north side of the city.

The warehouse-cum-carpentry club provides industrial equipment for experienced carpenters and training classes to teach the basics.



Zhang Hubin, founder of the club works as the product director at a communication company.



Photos by Song Nannan

Huang Wei works for an IT company. Like many young man in the industry, he loved building his own things out of wood. He has already made his own bookshelf, a double bed and a baby bed for his newly-born daughter. But his most interesting project has been a computer chassis.

"I can't tell which project is my favorite: I'm proud of myself for making all of them. The way I designed the junction in the double bed makes it safer than most of the beds on the market, and the baby bed was my first gift to my daughter," Huang says.

Huang has never formally studied carpentry: he learned on his own by putting things together and taking them apart. Most of his projects took several days and were made using basic tools like electric saws, hand saws, planes, drills and edge trimmers from the Heyi hardware market on Beijing's south side.

The materials like wood came from flea markets where they were cheaper than equivalent products from wood dealers.

"I like IKEA's designs, but its products are a little expensive. But I appreciate the pleasure of making things by hand even more. Woodwork is all about creativity: you encounter a lot of problems and have to learn to solve them one by one," Huang says.

But woodwork involves dust and noise, and the average apartment is too small for larger projects. That's why woodworking fans in Tiantongyuan founded North City Warehouse.

Hidden behind hardware shops and mechanics, the club was founded last August. After failing to find a cheap home where they could carry out their projects, a landlord suggested starting their own venue. The warehouse cost 200,000 yuan to set up, including furniture and machinery purchases.

North City Warehouse is separated into two sections: a work area and a rest area with sofas,



Huang Wei's computer chassis is designed as a drawer. Photo by Guo Xiaohan

computers, compact stereo systems and a magazine shelf. Newcomers take a while to adjust to the noise and dust in the venue, and equipment like safety glasses and face masks is essential.

Zhang Hubin, founder of the club, works at the venue on weekends. The 30-year-old part-time woodworker is a product director at a communications company during the day. He designs his blueprints using Google's SketchUp at the office and takes the designs to the warehouse to be machined.

But since the founding of the club, Zhang has had little time to realize his designs. Training sessions for the club's newcomers take up the bulk of his time.

Before going to the club, the aspiring woodworkers met on Douban. Zhang also created a website, Zuodongxi.com, to discuss woodworking and baking. "There used to be no place for beginners to practice, so we filled in that blank. Unfortunately, doing so cost me a lot of my time. A lot of my plans have had to go on hold," Zhang says.

Last October, the club organized its biggest event, where 40 participants broke into groups to make a model truck. The event began at 9 am and continued until 5 pm.

Most people who come to the club are 30-year-old workers in the IT, entertainment or media industries. There are also a lot of students who come to practice what they learn in their classes. Beginners start with basic projects like benches and bookshelves, and Zhang provides free briar wood.

"Negotiating with wood dealers is an art. We were cheated many times before we finally learned the right way to do it. Most of them have no experience selling wood to individuals, and that only further complicated things," Zhang says.

"It was kind of funny, some suppliers thought we were a manufacturer and they came to us asking us to make something for them," he says.

The club has continued to learn and grow, and today its events draw hundreds of people. Some OEM factories for overseas machine brands have even contacted the wood shop to explore the potential for their products in the Chinese market. The Australian brand Woodfast is the current sponsor of the workshop's equipment.

But maintaining the machines is a complicated job. Incorrect operation is responsible for much of the damage, especially to cutting tools.

The club even attracts foreigners, and at the time of *Beijing Today's* visit there were two Americans working on a game table for their new bar. "They are really professional. I know little about them except that one of them moved 12 times, and every time he built the furniture for the new house by himself," Zhang says.

"In America, the woodworking hobby scene is a market that's valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars. In China, it doesn't exist at all," Zhang says.

Because the club was built for Zhang and his friends, none of them have earned a profit on their investment. At one point they were attempting to craft handmade ballpoint pens, but the market was too difficult to crack. They are currently planning to hire workers to make handicrafts to sell to gift shops.

"I think we need to worry about strengthening the scene before we try and make a profit from it. This is a long-term project, and we're not in a hurry to see it pay off," Zhang says.

North City Warehouse
Where: Tiantongyuan station, subway line 5
Open: noon - 8 pm
Tel: 13439230948
Charge: 50 yuan per day

How you can get a better night's sleep

By Annie Wei

A third of our life is spent sleeping, so money spent on improving sleep quality is money well spent. Quality sleep results in higher efficiency at work, a better mood, more energy and a higher metabolism.

Beijing Today scouts out items that might help you find a sounder snooze.

Lavender scent, 79 yuan



lavender plant, 29-39 yuan



Lavender fragrance bag, 9-19 yuan

Photos by Wei Li

Lavender aroma

Many people know lavender oil can help one sleep. Be sure to use it in moderation, or choose diluted lavender products.

Wangmei Shenghuo

Where: A29, Xinwenhua Guangchang, Bailitai, 109 Weijin Lu, Nankai District, Tianjin

Open: 10 am - 9 pm
Tel: 022-2330 9379



Photos provided by Hästens/CFP

Quality bed products

People on average spend 25 years in bed. Why not make sure those are years well spent?

One of the top bed brands, Hästens, opened its flagship store at Sanlitun North recently, with beds starting at several hundred thousand yuan.

Hästens beds are handmade using natural materials. For example, the frame is from selective pine from Nordic forests, with flax between the springs to ensure a silent and peaceful bed, and horsehair, cotton and wool in the middle section.

Hästens offers lifetime insurance on its products.

For apartment dwellers looking for something more affordable, we recommend bed mats and sheets. Taobao stores sell bed mats and blankets that are 90 percent down, and silk coverlets at reasonable prices. Check out shop35397729.taobao.com and lsi.taobao.com.

Hästens

Where: NLG-45, 11 Village North, Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 10 am - 10 pm
Tel: 6415 6915



Sleep better iPhone application

iPhone applications to help you sleep are available starting from \$1.99 (13 yuan). Read the reviews in Apple's App Store to choose the product that suits you.



Bedroom decoration

The bedroom should be a place for pure relaxation. We suggest you invest 500 yuan to update your curtains to the thick, double-layered kind to keep room temperatures constant and isolate the room from outside noise. Most hotels use double-layered curtains to keep out sunshine, which leads to better mornings.

We also suggest buying some green plants as decoration. Lovely glass containers (19 to 25 yuan) are perfect for keeping plants and adding some zest to your bedroom.

Wangmei Shenghuo

Where: A29, Xinwenhua Guangchang, Bailitai, 109 Weijin Lu, Nankai District, Tianjin

Open: 10 am - 9 pm
Tel: 022-2330 9379



Glass containers, 19-25 yuan Photos by Wei Li



Sexy sporty outfits

Exercise is a good cure for insomnia. We suggest you spend at least 30 minutes walking, running or swimming in the late afternoon. Put on a sexy bikini or sport outfit and get to it. Good-looking and inexpensive swimsuits are available at gretarose.taobao.com. For less than 150 yuan, you can get some that are cute enough for a fashion show.



CFP Photo

The perfect season for Huaiyang cuisine

By Annie Wei

Traditional medicine suggests people should eat seasonal foods with light flavors during the transition between winter and spring. Vegetables like ginger, leeks, spring bamboo shoots, shallots and garlic sprouts can boost your energy and immune system so that you can shed those winter coats without worrying about catching a cold. Chinese medicine also recommends something sweet, which can help your liver, and vegetables that are dark red and orange or deep green to prevent you from feeling sleepy in the afternoons. Huaiyang cuisine meets these conditions. The food is from the Huaiyang area, comprising the cities of Huai'an, Huaiyin, Yangzhou and Zhenjiang in Jiangsu Province. It is known for using seasonal ingredients and having a slightly sweet, savory but light flavor. *Beijing Today* has picked some places known for authentic Huaiyang food.

Chynna – special chef from Yangzhou

Following Spring Festival, Hilton Wangfujing's Chinese restaurant, Chynna, began hosting Huaiyang dining with special guest chef Xiao Qinghe from Yangzhou. Huaiyang cuisine will be offered until Sunday.

Xiao has been cooking Huaiyang cuisine for three decades. "Huaiyang cuisine uses fresh vegetables, river fish and poultry," he said. "It has southern characteristics of freshness, crispiness and tenderness, combined with northern characteristics of saltiness, color and flavor."

Juliennded tofu is prevalent in every meal. "People in Yangzhou love tofu," Xiao said. The Juliennded tofu tastes much softer, tenderer and slipperier, and its preparation tests the cook's cutting skills. Each thread should be evenly sized.

We recommend the tofu soup with mushroom and ham or Huaiyang-style tofu with chicken soup. Both are light yet full of flavors.

We also love its steamed pork balls with crab roe. Steamed pork balls are informally called *shizitou* – lion's heads. Traditionally, the balls are 60 percent pork fat and 40 percent lean meat, mixed with shallots, ginger and cooking wine.

The secret to good *shizitou* lies in controlling the heat and steaming time. Also, "I have used less fat, only 50 percent," Xiao said. He chops the meat by hand

to have it retain its chewiness.

Steamed pork with soy sauce and special stewed eel are also classic Huaiyang dishes. The pork is simmered with soy sauce, Shaoxing rice wine and crystal rock sugar. When it is ready, the meat gets so tender and infused with the flavor of rice wine and soy sauce that it gains a slight sweetness. The river eel is braised in dark soy sauce and seasoned with ginger, scallions and bean sprouts.

March is also the season for people in the Huaiyang region to eat river fish, especially catfish from the Yangtze River. Xiao has prepared braised spring bamboo shoots with shrimp roe and catfish using seasonal ingredients shipped from Yangzhou.

Chynna

Where: 8 Wangfujing Dong

Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm,

5:30-9 pm

Tel: 5812 8888 ext. 8411

Cost: For special Huaiyang food experience, 288 yuan per person with 15 percent surcharge.



Light flavored duck from Chynna



Steamed river fish is in season

CFP Photos



Steamed pork with soy sauce



Deep-fried Mandarin fish, 188 yuan

CFP Photo

Songhelou – 200 years of history

Songhelou is famous in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province. It was established in 1737 during the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1736-96), a legendary figure who has inspired many folk stories.

In Beijing, there are several Huaiyang restaurants also named Songhekou. The one in Taijicang opened in 1984 after the country began allowing restaurants to establish themselves to multiple locations.

The most famous dish is *songshuyu* (188 yuan), deep-fried Mandarin fish coated in a tangy sauce. It tastes sweet and sour, crispy on the outside and tender inside. *Songshuyu* means "squirrel fish" because the dish comes out looking like a squirrel's tail.

Fried river shrimp (250 yuan) is a traditional Huaiyang dish; the kitchen hand-peels each shrimp before cooking.

For locals, Songhekou is a place to celebrate with the oldest member of the family. The name Songhekou combines pine trees with cranes – two symbols of longevity in Chinese culture.

Some online reviews have complained that, compared with modern restaurants, the service at Songhelou is a bit behind the times, too much in the rigid style of state-owned enterprises.

Songhekou

Where: 10 Taijicang Dajie, Chongwen District

Open: 11 am – 2 pm, 5-9 pm

Tel: 6524 5223

Cost: Average 150 yuan per person

Other known Huaiyang restaurants

Huaiyangfu

This restaurant comes recommended by many Huaiyang locals who visit Beijing. The tofu is well cut, the chicken stock is properly prepared, giving a clear and strong flavor, and the river shrimp is fresh.

Near the financial district, this is a good place to entertain business guests.

Where: Floor 1, China National Peking Opera Company, 22 Ping'anli, Xi Dajie, Xicheng District

Open: 11 am – 3 pm, 5-9 pm

Tel: 5851 9988

Cost: Average 200 yuan per person

Huaiyang Restaurant of Jiangsu Provincial Building

All provinces and regions have set up their official regional restaurants in Beijing. They have become diners' first choices for authentic provincial cuisines. The Huaiyang restaurant at

Jiangsu Provincial Building is worth a try.

Where: Floor 2, Jiangshu Dasha, Ding 88 Andingmen Wai Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11:30 am – 2 pm,

5-9 pm

Tel: 6426 6398

Cost: Average 120 yuan per person

Wumingju

The restaurant is known for dishes that are national banquet quality. Huaiyang cuisine is its specialty. The restaurant was established in 1995 with chief chef Wu Jia'an, who was a legend who often catered for prime minister Zhou Enlai. Wu was also appointed to cook Huaiyang dishes for Richard Nixon in 1972 during his visit to China.

Where: 19 Gaoliangqiao Xiejie, Haidian District

Open: 11 am – 4 pm, 5-9 pm

Tel: 6220 8200

Cost: Average 200 yuan

Steamed pork balls with crab roe from Chynna

Photos provided by Hilton Wangfujing

Beyond Hotel California

By Wang Yu

For music fans in China, mentioning anything about a hotel in California will inevitably steer the conversation toward the Eagles.

In the mid '90s when Hi-Fi equipment began to become affordable, imported audio CDs and cassettes were the locals' only source of music. *Hell Freezes Over*, the Eagles' live record released in 1994, became one of the most popular albums in China.

It introduced the idea of unplugged music to Chinese fans, and the excellent recording of Hotel California ensured the classic would remain a mainstay for the next two decades – and counting.

But the Eagles aren't all about Hotel California. The group began as a backup for country rock singer Linda Ronstadt on her tour in 1971 but would go on to make seven albums, six of which reached No. 1 in the US.

The Eagles won six Grammys and five American Music Awards, making them the most successful musical act of the '70s. What is generally forgotten is that the band's compilation album, *Their Greatest Hits (1971 - 1975)*, is only one of two albums in American music history – along with Michael Jackson's *Thriller* – to

go platinum 29 times, which means it sold more than 29 million copies.

In 2007, the Eagles released *Long Road Out of Eden*, the first album with new tracks since 1979. It quickly became the No. 1 record in the US and UK. Though singer and drummer Don Henley once said in a CNN interview that it might be the last Eagles album, its commercial success proved this band

might another act in them yet.

As part of the Eagles world tour, the band will perform in Beijing and Shanghai. Glen Frey, guitarist, said it may be difficult to live up to Chinese audiences' enthusiasm, but that everyone is in great shape and up for the challenge.

Facts you may not know about the Eagles:

1. Italian soccer legend Roberto Baggio is a huge Eagles

fan. He learned the lyrics of Hotel California by heart when he was 10 – a long time before he knew what the lyrics meant.

2. Singer Don Henley is nicknamed "Nikon Don," as he has a habit of making movies with female fans on tour. Nikon, incidentally, never officially sponsored Henley.

3. On July 31, 1980, in Long Beach, California, Glen Frey and former eagle Don Felder spent the entire show threatening one another. The Eagles then disbanded.

4. Guitarist Jow Walsh ran for president in 1980 and vice president in 1992. He failed to carry any state.

Eagles China Tour

Where: MasterCard Center (formerly Wukesong Arena), 69 Fuxing Lu, Haidian District

When: March 12, 7:30 pm
Admission: 350 – 2,580 yuan

Tel: 400 610 3721



Saturday, March 5

Movie A Disappearance Foretold (2008)

In advance of the 2008

Olympic Games, the city renovated the 500-year-old labyrinth of small streets around Qianmen. This film follows the long process of transformation.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 8459 9269

Nightlife EF

This Swedish rock band is touring Beijing to promote its most recent album, *Mourning Golden Morning*, released last April.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm
Admission: 60 yuan

advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door

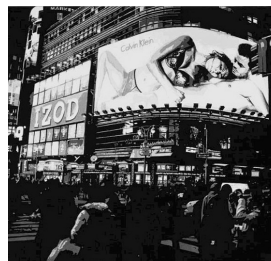
Tel: 6402 5080

Exhibition Blot backgrounds – The Landscape of Another Landscape

This exhibition presents Korean artist Jang Jae Rok's paintings on urban landscapes such as snowy night streets and sports cars on roads and parking lots.

Where: Artside Gallery, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 31
daily except Monday, 10 am – 6:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9192



Friday, March 4

Exhibition Place of Games – Ji Lei Solo Exhibition

This exhibition presents

Ji's 20 recent paintings about amusement parks, which are shifting from a child's playground to a place for adults to release their negative emotions.

Where: Boers-Li Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 20, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6432 2620

Movie The Men Who Stare at Goats (2009)

This comedy is about an American reporter in Iraq meeting a businessman who

was a former member of a secret unit in the US army called the First Earth Battalion, whose mission it was to influence interrogation techniques.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife Agnes Kain

This Australian indie-folk duo uses an array of instruments, including violin, mandolin, piano and acoustic guitar.

Where: Bo House, 768 Design Park, 5 Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 80 yuan
advance purchase, 100 yuan at the door, 70 yuan for students
Tel: 13426117374

Sunday, March 6

Nightlife Zhang Yide

Zhang brings a night of folk rock music.

Where:

Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

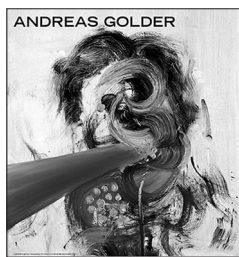
When: 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for students

Tel: 6401 4611

Exhibition I Wanna be Adored

This exhibition presents



Russian artist Andreas Golder's new works from when he stayed in the gallery last fall and winter.

Where: Gallerie Urs Meile Beijing, 104 Caochangdi Vil-

lage, Chaoyang District
When: Until April 10, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6433 3393

Movie

50 First Dates (2004)

Henry Roth is a skirt chaser who never wants to commit until he meets Lucy, who suffers from amnesia caused by a car accident. Her memories are only of the day before the accident.

Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 6:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6270 1928



Upcoming

Nightlife

The Bigger Bang, DH & the Chinese Hellcats and Bye-bye Thanks for Your Fish!

Three young bands are set to rock the night.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: March 8, 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door, free for ladies

Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in April

Concert

Westminster Boys' Choir

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: April 5, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-580 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Hilary Hahn and The English Chamber Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 8, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-800 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Traditional Irish Music by the Blackwater Band

Where: National Library Concert Hall, 33 Zhongguancun Nan Dajie, Haidian District

When: April 9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-380 yuan

Tel: 8854 5531

Li Yundi and China

National Center for the Performing Arts Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 23, 7:30 pm

Admission: 200-1,200 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Songs of the Wanderers by Cloud Gate Theater

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 1-2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

Burnt by the Sun

Where: Capital Theater, 22 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 4-17, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan, 40 yuan for students

Tel: 6524 6789

Opera

Bizet's Opera: Carmen

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 9-16, 7:30 pm

Admission: 160-880 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Scalp health problems caused by fake hair

By Chu Meng

Five years ago, John Baldwin, a London barrister, stood before the Royal Courts of Justice holding up his curly white wig.

"Some people think [the wig] gives them more authority," Baldwin said of his traditional horsehair headpiece, part of the required attire for British courtrooms. "Most of us just think they're itchy. They are as quaint and outdated as quill pens and suits of armor."

His complaint shook apart the 300-year-old tradition, leading lawmakers to dissolve the requirement two years later. Dermatologists say this was a smart move, and that wig-wearing — especially in the spring and summer — is responsible for a host of scalp problems.

Zhang Lichao, a dermatologist from Beijing Tongren Hospital, said he has seen a spike in the number of young patients with itchy scalp, hair loss and serious dandruff since the wig and hair extension craze took off.

"Fake hair, once a beautiful solution to hair problems, has become a cause of imperfect hair. Poor selection, wearing and maintenance are responsible for many of the scalp problems we are seeing today," Zhang said.

Fake hair has long been removed from medical circles. What was once an accessory to cover up baldness had become an assortment of head-wear manufactured in wild styles and colors — an accessory for the fashionable wardrobe.

Some of the luxury wigs can even be refitted to look like new styles, changing the hair from curly to straight and back again.

There's no question that some wigs, when worn correctly, can help to better frame the face to look more attractive. People with thin hair often turn to hairpieces to create the illusion of thicker locks.

"But these products touch the scalp — your skin — the entire day. This endless contact and abrasion can easily cause serious scalp health prob-

lems," Zhang said.

One patient, Zhan Xuan, the 27-year-old mother of an infant, had visited Zhang while pregnant to find a way to cope with her pregnancy-related hair loss. Zhang suggested a wig.

"I originally had soft, thin hair that was a little greasy. It was usually hard to style, so I made frequent trips to the salon to have it trimmed, styled and dyed," Zhan said.

Because the wig was so convenient, she continued wearing it even after pregnancy. She bought a variety of wigs from hair accessory stores so she could have long and short, curly and straight or colored and black locks depending on what went with her clothes.

"My problems came after a month of constant wear. My scalp became more and more itchy, and sometimes there was a hot, stabbing feeling. I was having dandruff for the first time in my life, and my hair was falling out and turning greasy even faster," she told Zhang.

Zhang said the problems were caused by incorrect wig selection and wear. As it is skin, the scalp requires room to breathe and a clean environment. Wigs create a barrier that traps humidity, which increases sweat and creates an environment where bacteria and fungus can thrive.

Healthy ways to wear your wig:

1. Let the scalp breathe: Wigs are made of all kinds of fibers. The two general categories are synthetic fibers and human hair. Synthetic hair is simply very fine plastic. This is cheap and easy to handle since it never loses its curl after washing. However, its structure and chemical characteristics make synthetics heavier and thicker, trapping humidity and suffocating the skin.

Wigs made of real human hair tend to be lighter and airier. Though the prices of finer human hair products may cost 5,000 to 10,000 yuan, they will keep your scalp healthy and free of dandruff, fungus and bacteria.

A 50-50 human-synthetic blend tends to give the best of both worlds. It looks and feels like real hair, but holds its shape like a synthetic wig.

2. Avoid extended wear: No matter how fine the texture, wigs are like hats and create a barrier around the scalp. The hair wax and fasteners used to restrain natural hair when placing a wig can make the skin hot and greasy.

Being trapped in such an environment is very bad for your hair follicles. People who wear wigs eight hours a day, seven days a week can cause serious hair loss even if they don't have it. The buildup of sebum, dandruff and fungus can also result in extremely itchy rashes and dermatitis.

3. Wash hair before wearing a wig: Human hair is self-cleaning, but synthetic fibers and treated hair used in wigs lack this ability. If you have naturally greasy hair, you should wash

before wearing a wig. Do not apply hair creams or perfumes because these can feed any bacteria or fungi that end up trapped under your wig.

4. Cleaning a wig too often is better than cleaning it too little:

How often to clean your wig depends on where you wear it and how often you exercise. Generally speaking, it is a good idea to clean your wig every 20 hours of wear.

Do not use regular cleaning products. Wig shampoos, conditioners and lusterizers are specially designed to work with the fibers that are used in the manufacturing of the wigs. The hair used in human hair wigs have usually been processed multiple times during the wig's creation, making it very susceptible to damage.

Brush and comb the wig to remove tangles. Fill the sink or a large bowl with cold water and add one cap of the specially formulated wig shampoo. Mix it well and then immerse the wig in water and swirl it around for several minutes. Use a soft toothbrush to scrub out make-up stains. Let the wig soak for 5-10 minutes before rinsing with clean water.

Never throw your fake hair in the washing machine with your clothes: it will destroy the hair's roots.

5. Store your wig somewhere with fresh air: When not wearing your wig, store it on a wig stand so that it can breathe and avoid developing an odor. Keep your wig away from direct sunlight and never store it in a plastic bag. A scarf draped over the wig should be sufficient to keep dust from building up.



CFP Photo

Escape to the wintry sea



Frozen reef in the sea create a unique landscape. CFP Photos



Jade Island

Photo by Zhao Zhongji

By Liang Meilan

Beidaihe, Qinhuangdao, a three-hour drive from Beijing, is typically visited by people during warmer months, but in recent years more people have begun visiting during the winter and early spring to avoid the crowds and catch the amazing sight of drifting ice blocks.

The ice off the coast of Beidaihe usually melts in April, which means there's time yet to check it out. The temperature is expected to be mild, too – highs of about 10 C in the coming week.



Appeal of the middle beach

The Beidaihe coast can be divided into three parts: west, middle and east. The middle beach is the best, and it's no surprise that there are plenty of guesthouses in the area. Take Bus 34 to Haibinchenzhan station, the terminal, and walk a few blocks to the sea.

Take a moment to enjoy the fresh air and lack of tourists. September to April is the low season for Beidaihe, which means you won't need to fight the crowd for hotel reservations or the perfect spot on the sand.

The nearby district of Liuzhuang is famous for its resorts, which offer quality service in a commercial area. Many of the

hotels there are closed at this time, but those that are open offer rooms for a third of the price during peak season.

Qishilin hotel at Liuji Road, two blocks from the bus station, comes recommended. A double room goes for 130 yuan, down from 400 yuan during the summer.

The sea can be found behind a gentle 300-meter slope. European and Russian-style buildings and restaurants are everywhere, though many are closed.

One can walk through Tiger Stone (Lao-hushi) Park, which is free to the public, to get to middle beach.

This part of the coast features rocks in interesting formations. The air apparently contains 4,000 anions per cubic centime-

ter, about 10 to 20 times higher than that of an average inland city. There is something about sea air that makes it seem healthier to take in, apparently.

The floating ice is indeed quite a sight, but also impressive are patches of pristine, untouched snow around the shore. Shutterbugs will be delighted, no doubt. Stay for the sunrise and sunset to capture extra special shots.

Greeting the migratory birds

Another great place to see the sun peek out of the clouds is at Geziwo Park. Bus 34 goes to it – about six stops away from the middle shore.

What's special about Geziwo is that groups of sea gulls and birds can be seen

flying over the ocean. This is truly a well-preserved beach, with exuberant plants providing a sanctuary for migratory birds.

A bird preservation region is nearby, combining a wetland with a woody area covering 470,000 square meters. More than 400 types of birds reside here.

"In the spring, birds pass over freely, not frightened by the people everywhere," said Zhao Zhongji, a 48-year-old Qinhuangdao resident and photographer with 23 years of experience. "This is the best time for bird-watching."

Adventurous bird watchers can head south from the middle shore to explore natural woods that are home to a variety of species.

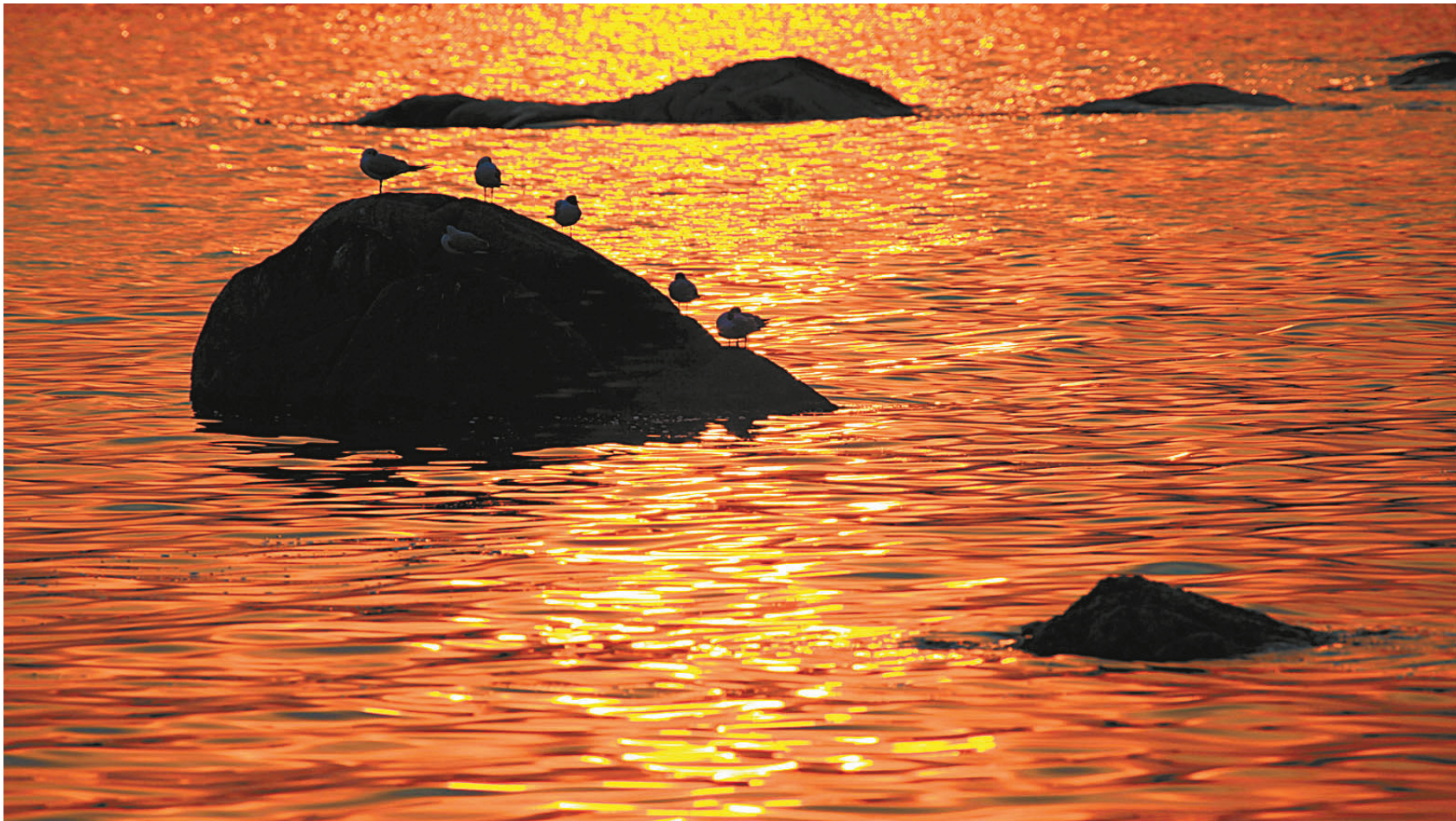
Continued on page 21...



Fishing boats rest on the beach.



Geziwo Park



Beidaihe is expected to welcome the first wave of migratory birds in early March.

Photos by Zhao Zhongji



The pavilion in Laohushi Park is ideal for viewing the sunrise. CFP Photo



Shanhaiguan, the "First Pass Under Heaven"

CFP Photo

...continued from page 20

Sea fishing

The mild waters near Geziwo would be perfect for kayaking – if only kayaks were available to rent. Alas, the Chinese have yet to adopt this activity.

But fishing, however, is available. One can hire a local fisherman to take one out into the water and ice. The normal hours for this activity are between 3 am and 5 am, so prepare to rise early.

Local fishermen are very friendly to tourists and visitors. They are very willing to tell stories about the habits of different marine life and show off their fishing skills.

Visitors can also purchase fresh seafood from fishermen in the early morning.

Red-claw crabs are one of the few seafood items available in the spring. It is sold at about 120 yuan per kilogram.

We recommend you avoid the crab vendors who ride around on motorcycles, who inflate their prices.

The wet market on Shitang Lu is a good place to get seafood. Mantis shrimps stored in iceboxes and various kinds of dry fish are worth buying.

One can get the seafood cooked in most of the restaurants and hotels for a small fee.

Hiking and camping

Beidaihe and the surrounding regions are great for backpackers who like to hike and camp.

A large, undeveloped area of sand beaches along the south beach, nicknamed "the great desert to the east of the capital," also known as Jade Island, is ideal for camping. Bonfire parties are allowed at night. Fireworks can be set off the coast as well, providing another visual treat.

If one has enough time, a one-day hike will take you to a snow-covered portion of the Great Wall.

Start in the morning at Laolongtou, the seaside beginning of the Great Wall.

After a five-hour hike west, one will arrive at Shanhaiguan, the first major pass of the Great Wall. Have lunch here or visit the Great Wall museum.

Continue westward toward Jiaoshan, a dangerous, undeveloped part of the Great Wall. It's about a three-hour walk to there.

Dongjiakou is a site that shouldn't be missed. It was an important fortress in ancient China, and the villagers who live at the foot of the mountain near Dongjiakou are all descendents of the warriors who used to be garrisoned around these parts.

These villagers still practice the tradition of preserving the Great Wall – a modern variation of an edict given to their forebears a long time ago by the emperor himself.

Talking to the villages about their lifestyle and the reasons for preserving traditional ways of life can be a meaningful cultural experience.

Hikers can end the day at Jiaoshan with a sunset. Camp there overnight, and be sure to greet the sunrise the next morning.

Getting there: Take a coach at Bawangfen Bus Station to Qinhuangdao (98 yuan). It dispatches vehicles to Qinhuangdao every hour from 7 am to 7 pm.

Accommodation:

Qishilin Hotel
Where: 96 Dongjing Lu, Beidaihe District, Qinhuangdao
Tel: 0335-3216110

Admissions:

Laohushi Park: Free
Geziwo Park: 5 yuan
Shanhaiguan Great Wall Museum: 5 yuan



Hotel



Spring essentials to restore balance and lift the spirit

Indulge into a rebalancing body wrap to recapture moisture and body tone, complete with relaxing touch therapy (90 minutes). Or begin with traditional Chinese therapy and end with a foot acupressure massage to restore body chi and improve energy flow to promote wellness (90 minutes).

Where: Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8 Wangfujing Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Daily, 10 am – 11 pm, until April 30

Cost: 780 yuan (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 5812 8888 ext. 8560 for booking

Hilton searching for Beijing's top 'Tosser'

Get ready for Shrove Tuesday and join Hilton Beijing's second annual Pancake Race for a chance to win a trophy and be recognized as the capital's top pancake "tosser."

The Hilton Beijing lobby will be turned into an obstacle course that contestants must cross while tossing a freshly made pancake. The winner will be judged on speed, style, costume and number of complete tosses. Contestants who drop their pancake will be disqualified.

The first prize winner will get a 2011 Hilton Beijing pancake "tosser" trophy with other prizes for the runners up.

The event's phenomenal success last year inspired the hotel to make it a yearly tradition. Come and join us in the challenge.

Free entry for race competitors upon successful application (limit of 20 contestants).

Free entry for spectators with discounts on fresh pancakes and

hot and cold beverages.

Free entry to the pancake after-party at Zeta Bar. Drinks will be half off all night.

Where: Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 6-8 pm March 8

Tel: Contact Simon Amos, Hilton's food and beverage manager, at 5865 5120 to apply for the contest

E-mail: simon.amos@hilton.com

Kerry Hotel Pudong, Shanghai opens

Shangri-La International Hotel Management opened its Kerry Hotel Pudong, Shanghai on February 18. Located in the new Kerry Parkside complex in the heart of Pudong, the hotel is the latest addition to Kerry Hotels, the five-star brand operated by Shangri-La

Hotels and Resorts.

"Kerry Hotels will appeal to the business traveler who prefers a vibrant and relaxed environment without compromising on service or quality. The hotels are contemporary and provide a seamless link between business, entertain-

ment and recreation," said Greg Dogan, president and chief executive officer of Shangri-La International Hotel Management.

Its extensive leisure facilities are designed to become a social activity hub for both hotel guests and the local community.

Kempinski exhibits 'Water and Mountains' by Gronsky

As part of the Kempinski Arts Support Program, Estonian photographer Alexander Gronsky will be exhibiting a series of photographs taken on his recent China tour under the theme of "Water and Mountains" in the rear lobby of Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center from March 1 to 31.

"We are happy to introduce the Kempinski Arts Support Program to Chinese audiences for the first time. I believe our efforts in supporting art will encourage and promote cultural awareness and art education, and will make this hotel an art hot spot in the city," said Stephan Interthal, managing director of Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center.

Gronsky was one of the fellows of



Kempinski Arts Support Program established in 2009. Marylea Van Daalen, the program's director, outlined the development of the program since its creation at the VIP Cocktail Reception on February 28.

Where: Rear lobby of Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: March 1-31
Tel: 6465 3388

Zeta Bar's pole dancing competition returns

Zeta Bar, the capital's sexiest, is reviving its Pole Dancing Competition! After two successful contests, Zeta is again collaborating with Love Show Studio to show off the hottest moves from the hottest girls.

Gorgeous finalists will fight it out in Pole Domination to battle for the title of Beijing's Pole Dancing Queen and a cash prize.

Get ready for the night and don't miss the hot girls, sassy moves, seductive drinks, upbeat house music and great fun!

Where: Zeta Bar, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Starts 10 pm, March 26

Cost: 99 yuan cover charge, comes with one drink from Zeta Bar's specials

Tel: Zeta Bar at 5865 5050 or Anny An at 150 0124 0809 to reserve a table

E-mail: zetabar.beijing@hilton.com



Airline



Singapore Airlines adds flights to Hong Kong

Singapore Airlines is adding a seventh daily flight between Singapore and Hong Kong. The new service will begin on March 27.

The flight, SQ890, will be operated by a Boeing 777-200ER departing Singapore at 7:35 am and landing in Hong Kong at 11:20 am. The return flight departs Hong Kong at 12:30 pm.

The new flight expands customers' options for flight times with seven flights departing both Singapore and Hong Kong during a 12-hour period.

"We are grateful for the continued support of our customers on this popular route and are delighted that we now have the opportunity to offer both business and leisure travelers an additional choice of flight timings," said Executive Vice President Commercial Mak Swee Wah.

The new flight expands the airline's total seat offerings on the route from 1,847 per day to 2,151.

Jetstar profits for 6th year in a row

Jetstar continued grew 19 percent in the second half of 2010 in low-fare flight markets in Australia and Asia, Qantas Chief Executive Officer Alan Joyce said.

"Jetstar has been profitable every year since its launch in 2004 and, in keeping with this history, continued to expand its international and domestic networks, attracting significant growth in passenger numbers, while still reducing its unit costs," he said.

Much of these profits come from Jetstar Asia, which contributed 17 million dollars to Jetstar's total. In Singapore alone, it grew 46 percent in the second half of 2010 to become the nation's largest low-cost carrier. With its recently deployed A330 services out of Singapore, it is well positioned for future growth, Joyce said.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Be careful of the parting shot

By Wang Yu

People say office wars are common, but I feel lucky that the only "war" I've had was with someone in a different office. I can't imagine actually having to confront a coworker.

Sally is a magazine editor at a big magazine. To be honest, I don't respect a lot of big-magazine editors because they look down on other journalists. At the same time, they are interesting because they're part of an intellectual group of people on the cutting edge of the country's development.

It's just a shame that some of them waste their talents on petty issues.

I don't know Sally well, but numerous people have told me that she's flat-out mean. I didn't believe it until one day I quarreled with her online.

Many months ago, I was at my parents' home in Tianjin on a Saturday evening and browsing Sina's microblogs for interesting stories. I read a microblog message published by Sally about a dinner outing. Near the restaurant, she saw some old ladies collecting garbage on the side of the road and decided to give them her money, even though they didn't ask for it.

In itself that's fine, just another banal microblog post, but Sally proceeded to extrapolate from this incident to condemn others. She scolded the rest of society for the injustices that forced elderly women to collect garbage by the roadside.

Typical. What made Sally think she had the right to be the moral arbiter just because she gave away some money?

I replied to Sally's message, saying she shouldn't have given money because that could have potentially humiliated the garbage collectors.

Apparently this was enough to begin an online row.



Sally asked me to apologize. She threatened to find my IP address and uncover my identity.

I merely shrugged.

Nearly four months later, I encountered Sally at a dinner. She recognized my name and during the dinner was particularly mean, mocking many people, including those who had not read George Orwell.

After the dinner, as I was returning from a trip to the bathroom, I saw she had come back in to pick up her hat. She was on the way out when she glanced at me.

"Next time, please be kind," she said before leaving. She had to have the last words.

I told this to my friend David.

"Man, that was a real parting shot," he said.

"A parting shot?"

"Yeah, it means an act of aggression or retaliation, such as a retort or threat made upon one's departure."

I checked the phrase later online. It originally was "Parthian shot," referring to Parthian soldiers who pretended to retreat, only to circle back on the enemy.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

1. The Chinese government's rise

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): We usually say China's rise, but never say the Chinese government's rise. For when we say China's rise, it denotes a nation's rise. The government is a body of civil governance or the rulers of a state. A government's rise is different in nature from the rise of a nation.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): I think it might be possible to use this expression, but it would depend on the rest of the article. For example, exploring the rise to power of the Communist Party – the "government" – is important in the minds of Chinese citizens, and one could say "the government's rise" in that case.

2. Regarding to the country's rules

ZS: Regarding here is a preposition. There is not such a phrase as "regarding to." For instance, I must speak to you regarding that matter. His speech has dealt with questions regarding education. I suppose the writer may be confused with the phrase "in regard to." For instance, Sorghum is the least demanding grain in regard to water, soils and climate. Please don't be confused with the two, though they have the same meaning.

TBZ: Prepositions are a bugger. I tried to explain "consist of/in/with" today. Yikes. On another point, I always say "in regards to." I think it's a toward/towards, po-TEH-to / po-TAH-to, American/British English thing, with Canadian English getting caught in the middle.

3. It took 200 craftsmen working two straight weeks to make this.

ZS: Beginners to English find it very difficult to detect the error here. It seems to be a perfect sentence, with good structure. Let me tell where it is erroneous. The last "this" is grammatically redundant and wrong. Why? I now give you a simpler sentence structure to reveal the secret. We usually say, The house took us two months to build. Right? Would you say: The house took us two months to build it? So, the same holds true for the sample sentence, though it is a little more complicated: It took 200 craftsmen working two straight weeks to make.

TBZ: I agree and disagree. In written language, if "this" is dangling at the end there, it should be taken off, as Professor Zhu has said. However, in spoken language, if the tour guide is waving an arm and showing "this" to the group, it would be understandable.

4. A series enterprises

ZS: We have the set phrase "a series of." You can not possibly say "a series enterprises." It must be: "a series of enterprises." Just as we say, a series of books, a series of measures, a series of steps. For instance, The government has adopted a series of policies to bring down the real estate price.

TBZ: Looks like a typo – a serious enterprise? Serious enterprises?

5. Todd Philips directed Hangover and has been received by both critics and viewers.

ZS: The problem lies in the second part of this sentence. "To be received" is very much neutral in sense. What does "Todd Phillips has been received" mean? It means nothing. As it is a movie, it has to be received as a fact by viewers. But if you say "Todd Phillips has been well (or warmly) received," then it is a totally different thing, as it denotes the degree of reception. Otherwise it is a senseless expression.

TBZ: I agree, and I think the sentence should be clarified: is it Phillips who has been well received or his movie *Hangover*? For example: Phillips directed *Hangover* and he/it/his work has been warmly received by critics.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Burn the Dress

By Terry Boy-Zhang

I've heard of burning a bra before – from the 1968 women's liberation movement. At a rally, feminists wanted to burn their bras, but the police stopped them. The media nonetheless dubbed them "bra burners."

"Trash the dress" is apparently a new phenomenon in postnuptial ceremonies. It even has its own acronym, TTD. Instead of stuffing your dress in a box under your bed until it yellows, you actually wreck it one day – symbolizing your undying love and devotion for your partner. One



way to destroy it is by burning it while taking some romantic keepsake photos in the process.

Some people inadvertently help the economy by buying and destroying a secondhand dress, not the one that was worn during the wedding.

Let's go back to the sign. The first character is *tang*, which means very hot, scalding, iron or perm (your hair). The top half of the character is "soup" and the bottom half is "fire" – how much more "burn" do you want? The second character is *yi*, a general word for "clothing," and the last is *jian*, meaning "room."

My husband says this sign actually means "Ironing Room."

Considering I seldom wear a dress and never iron anything, I'll just have to trust him on that one. Now, let me go see if he's finished burning my bra.



Mary and Max⁽²⁰⁰⁹⁾

Movie of the week

Mary and Max is set in 1972 and based on a true story. An 8-year-old girl and a 44-year-old man with Asperger's Syndrome, a borderline form of autism, write to each other as friends for 20 years. They have little in common, but they exchange letters talking about everything from pets to neighbors, jobs and obesity.

Mary grows up, and Max grows old and dies. Unfortunately, when viewed in an era of email and smart phones, the tale seems as quaint and removed as a silent film. Few people still put pen to paper when it's time to communicate.

Synopsis

This Australian claymation tells a simple tale of correspondence between the 8-year-old Mary from Melbourne and a middle-aged Jewish New Yorker called Max who has Asperger's Syndrome. Mary casually selects Max as a pen pal from a phone book and begins to write to him.

After 20 years of correspondence, Mary makes the trip to visit Max only to learn he died that morning. In his apartment is a wall made of the letters she had written over the previous two decades.

Scene 1

(Max reads Mary's letter four times. After staring out of the window for 18 hours, he finally decides to reply.)

Max: Dear Mary Daisy Dinkle, thank you for the letter, which I opened and read at 9:17 pm after my Overeaters Anonymous class. I am trying to lose weight because my psychiatrist, Dr. Bernard Hazelhof, says a healthy body equals a healthy mind. He says my mind is not that healthy.

I have had many different jobs during my life. My first job was collecting subway tokens in the subway. My second job was at Yiddel's Gourmet Kosher Supplies where I worked at the machine that made pre-packaged noodle kugels.

I was born Jewish and used to believe in God but I've since read many books that have proven God is just a figment of my imagination. People like to believe in God because it answers complicated questions like where did the universe come from, do worms go to heaven ... and why do old ladies have blue hair? Even though I'm an atheist, I still wear my yarmulke as it keeps my brain warm.

My third job was for a company that printed logos on novelty items. I worked at the Frisbee printing machine.

(Machine creaks and squeals)

A Frisbee is a circular plastic disc that people throw at each other. It is like a boomerang but it does not come back.

My fourth job was when I was called up for jury duty. I didn't get paid much but got free cookies and coffee. Jurors are outstanding members of the community who haven't murdered anybody. I made it to the short list for a trial where a man killed all his friends at his own surprise birthday party. Unfortunately, I didn't get selected because they found out I'd been a mental patient **at one point (1)**. Have you ever been hang gliding? My fifth job was as a garbage collector. I got to clean up after litterbugs and didn't have to talk to anybody.

Vocabulary

- At one point:** For a time
- Take somebody by the throat:** to have a controlling grip
- Ache to:** yearn to
- Dribble away:** to ebb away or vanish slowly
- Rid of:** to remove or do away with.

(By Zhang Dongya)



Scene 3

(In university, Mary publishes her book on Asperger's syndrome and uses Max as her case study. She sends the book to Max and expressed her hope: to cure it one day. But Max doesn't take the news well at all.)

Max: Dear Mary Daisy Dinkle, I cannot express myself very clearly at this moment and so I will list my emotions in the order they feel most intense – hurt, confuzzledness, betrayal, discomfort, distress and wheeziness. This last one is not really an emotion, but I thought you should know about it anyway.

Narrator: With her suitcase packed for New York, Mary said goodbye to Damian. She hadn't been this excited since she'd found a Noblet in the gutter.

But her excitement suddenly **dribbled away (4)** like a chocolate in the sun.

Mary slowly sank into a puddle of depression, self-loathing and cooking sherry. The only color left in her life was her beloved Damian, only an arm's length away but as distant as the moon.

She lost interest in the world and it lost interest in her as a horrible apparition began to haunt. She started to spend her nights making pompoms and eating two-minute noodles. Each day, with strength and shame, Mary trudged to the letterbox in hope, only to swivel, shrivel and slink back inside.

Damian: My dearest Mary, by the time you read this, I will be on a plane to New Zea-

Scene 2

(Mary and Max have been writing to each other for years.)

Narrator: Each nourished the other and, as Mary grew taller, Max grew wider – their friendship becoming stronger than the glue on Mary's Noblets. Although Max found solace in Mary, he still found the rest of the world bewildering. And he couldn't understand why he was seen as the odd one while everyone else was considered normal. He agreed with his favorite physicist that there are only two things infinite – the universe and man's stupidity.

And for Mary, even though Max filled her with confidence ...

Bullseye! *(The postman throws a package.)*

... her world was far from perfect. The grip of love **had her by the throat (2)**.

At 4:59 pm, on the 8th of the 8th, 1988, Noel Norman Dinkle attached his last string and, after 40 years and 40 million tea bags, he retired. To celebrate, Noel announced he was retiring from taxidermy and taking up metal detecting instead. But, sadly, it was not a hobby he had for long. In his will, Noel

had left Mary some money, so she decided to go to university and study disorders of the mind, yearning to learn more about her friend.

Mary was as popular at university as she was at school. Damian went there too, **aching to (3)** be a thespian.

Damian (D): Hi there, M-M-Mary.

Mary (M): Hi ... hello!

D: That was damn f-funny!

M: Hey, Damian, your mum's roses look fab!

D: Oh, th-th-th-thanks, Mary. Um. M-Mary, can I tell you something?

M: Sure, babe!

D: Um, um, you've got d-d-d-dog's poo on your shoe.

Mary: Dear Max, I have been such an idiot. I've wasted all my money on something pointless when I should have been saving to see you. I know love upsets you so I won't go on about it. All I want to say is that love is obviously not for me. I hope you are well and enjoy the chocolate cigarettes I've enclosed. Love Mary.

land to begin a new life. You probably haven't even noticed I'd packed my bags. I have fallen in love with my pen friend, Desmond, and I'm going to live on his sheep farm.

It's been hard to watch you become a remnant of the person I once loved. Your research into m-m-mental illness has been admirable, but your i-idealistic pursuit to remedy it has been misguided. Mary, you have to realize y-you are not a magic beauty cream you can smooth on the world to **rid it of (5)** its wrinkles.

I love you, Mary, but I love Desmond more. I hope one day your heart will heal and we can be friends. Yours compassionately, Damian.